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## INTERVIEW: REP. CHRIS SMITH

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# The American Legion

For God and Country

Vol. 150, No. 5

The Magazine for a Strong America

MAY 2001

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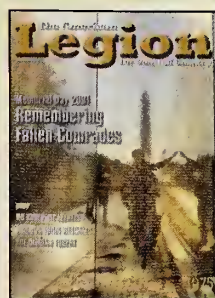
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**COVER** Holding the light of sunset are the chiseled memories of those who gave their lives in the Vietnam War. How accurately are we teaching our children the meaning behind the memorial? See Page 22. Stock Market photo

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.7 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 15,000 community-level Posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.



12



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P. O. Box 1055

Indianapolis, IN 46206

317-630-1200

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The American Legion Magazine

P. O. Box 7068

Indianapolis, IN 46207

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**Fox Associates, Inc.**

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Los Angeles: 310-841-0280

Detroit: 248-543-0068

Atlanta: 404-252-0968

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Copyright 2001 by The American Legion

The American Legion (ISSN 0886-1234) is published monthly by The American Legion, 5745 Lee Road, Indianapolis, IN 46216. Periodicals postage paid at Indianapolis, IN 46204 and additional mailing offices. Annual non-member and gift subscriptions, \$15 (\$21, foreign); Post-sponsored and widows' subscriptions, \$6; single copy, \$3.50. Member annual subscription price \$3.00, which is included in annual member dues. **POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The American Legion, Input Services, P.O. Box 1954, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Internet address: <http://www.legion.org>.**

**Change of Address:** Notify The American Legion, Input Services, P.O. Box 1954, Indianapolis, IN 46206. (317) 860-3111. Attach old address label, provide old and new addresses and current membership card number.

Canada Post International Publications Mail (Canadian Distribution) Sales Agreement No. 546321. Re-entered second-class mail matter at Manila Central Post office dated Dec. 22, 1991.



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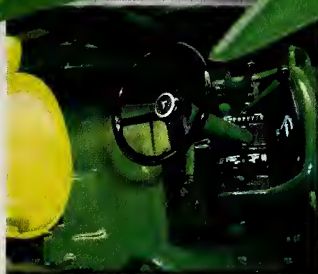
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## Border battle hits home

As a property owner in southern Arizona, I am familiar with the problems facing our country on the U.S.-Mexico border ("The Frontlines of Illegal Immigration," March). The problem is escalating and has hit my home radically.

On Feb. 12, my husband was murdered in our home by drug smugglers who were upset that he patrolled our property with a million-candle-power light. They lost a sizable drug load and assumed he was responsible for the bust. He was not responsible but was killed nonetheless.

We are not simply under attack from farm workers seeking employment; we are at risk from crime syndicates involved in international drug smuggling. The U.S. government calls this a "drug war." It is a war likened to Vietnam, where soldiers were limited to power in exercising border control.

On the border in the Douglas/Naco sector, where my home is located, local ranchers are threatened with litigation by the Mexican government if they defend their own property. Yet my husband can be murdered in cold blood in his own bed and we can do nothing?

If the U.S. government doesn't send the military in, they are negligent in protecting citizens, especially the ones living close to the border. My husband's life was taken from him at 47, leaving behind six children, four stepchildren and a wife. How many more families must suffer before the government takes control of our borders?

I urge all former military personnel and their families to write Congress concerning this invasion. We have left an open door for crime and terrorism, and our government is asleep.

— Deborah Divver, Palominas, Ariz.

## Proud to patrol

Your article on the U.S. Border Patrol's El Paso sector lacked only mention of the many officers — men and women — who belong to The American Legion. About 50 percent of El Paso Post 74's members, the only Legion law enforcement specialty Post in Texas, were recruit-

ed from the El Paso sector; some border patrol officers belong to other local Legion Posts. These are truly veterans "still serving America," not only in their patrol duties but also in the community-service activities of The American Legion.

— John B. McKinney,  
Commander, Post 74, El Paso, Texas

## Tort article on target

Dan Quayle's commentary "The Trouble With Tort" (March) hit the nail square on the head. Fear of litigation, lack of personal responsibility and the loss of common sense at every level of our judicial system has done much to undermine every effort made in today's America, be it personal, industrial, educational, spiritual or humanitarian.

The "welfare" and "lotto" mentalities permeate every inch of society, including our military and especially our health-care system. We should stop dropping bombs on Iraq and start dropping lawyers instead. They would destroy that country in short order, just as they continue to do here.

— John S. Allerdig, Loudonville, Ohio

## Courts too restrictive

It is true that the public perception of torts in America may indeed be the way Dan Quayle describes them, but the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow does not exist for the vast majority of injured people.

Most of the lawsuits listed in his arti-

cle admittedly seem frivolous, but only one side is presented. What Quayle's article fails to mention is that a number of people in this country are seriously injured and killed by the acts of others through no fault of their own. These people — or in some cases, their survivors — often have no other way to compensate for their losses than to utilize the legal system, and sometimes not even that is available to them.

If society had a better understanding of the legal system, I wouldn't be surprised if the pendulum started to swing the other way; the social consciousness would then be that the legal system should not be as restrictive as it already is.

— Donald T. Diederich, Shepherd, Mich.

## Tort reform? Fat chance

The media in the past has made out

Dan Quayle to be a buffoon, but his article on the need for tort reform has caused me to see him in a different light. He put in writing what I have said for years: People today want to blame others for their own failings. Some of this country's attorneys make a very good living cashing in on this trend. I sometimes wonder if they didn't start the trend when they realized they could make a fast buck at someone else's expense.

I agree with Quayle's analysis of the situation, but as long as politicians have their hands out and attorneys are willing to fill them, I see little chance of meaningful change.

— Douglas B. Eaby, Kirkwood, Penn.

## The trouble with lawyers

I find many problems with Dan Quayle's article on tort reform. First, as one of the primary contributors to the country's legal problems (by virtue of the fact that he is a lawyer), we should not put any stock in what any lawyer might suggest to help improve the situation. Lawyers are trained to cause conflict and complicate matters. The more problems they cause, the more they are paid.

Quayle and many other lawyers have long espoused having the losing



Tom Sheahan



Samuel A. Mince

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The American Legion Magazine welcomes letters concerning articles that appear in the publication. Be sure to include your hometown and a daytime phone number for verification. All letters are subject to editing. Send your opinions to:

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party in a civil lawsuit pay all the costs. This would shut out many small businesses and almost all individuals, and it would probably spawn a whole new industry: legal insurance. Most lawyers salivate at the idea of tapping into that kind of fund.

I would suggest the losing attorneys in civil cases not be paid at all. This would eliminate a whole bunch of Mickey Mouse lawsuits.

The basic problem is that lawyers in this country make the laws, practice the law and judge the laws. This kind of closed system can only lead to corruption. Lawyers should be restricted to practicing the law, and the other two functions should be completely separated from the first and each other.

We have more lawyers in this country than any other – more than 1 million, I believe. Why then, with all these lawyers running around – all of whom are sworn to uphold the law – don't we have the most crime- and corruption-free country on earth?

Ask that question of any lawyer, and see if you get an answer. I have not been able to.

– Dan Flanagan, Richardson, Texas

## Is Bush truly a veteran?

If a person never received a DD 214 and is not considered a veteran, how can he be a member of The American Legion? Also, give us the status on President Bush. I've noticed him with a Legion cap on, as though he's a veteran. Does he have a DD 214? And while he was in the Guard, was his unit activated? Please answer so we all can know the truth about the service record of our new commander in chief.

– Frank Clark, Springfield, Mo.

*Editor's Note: The American Legion's eligibility criteria for National Guard and Reserves personnel are no different than active-duty personnel: one day of federal active duty during one of the eligibility periods and an honorable discharge or still serving honorably.*

*However, the eligibility criteria for National Guard and Reserves personnel to receive VA benefits are different. Compensation for disability and all other benefits, excluding education and home-loan guarantees, require at least 180 days of service.*

*Regarding President Bush, a Texas Air National Guard veteran, he is eligible for Legion membership because he served on active duty for one year while undergoing flight training during the Vietnam War.*

## Be patient with President

I've been blessed to serve in our nation's armed forces on both active-duty and reserve status for 26 years. During that time, I have served under six Presidents. While we should encourage our new commander in chief to make good on all his promises, I feel we need to be patient. It is evident to me that we have a President who is taking a new approach to his office. Thank God he intends to take time to properly research all areas of the armed forces, both active and retired, to identify the needs of the soldier and veteran alike.

I certainly hope we give our new President the time needed to carefully construct policies that will benefit active-duty personnel and veterans. We saw fit to be patient with the last administration; let's give President Bush a chance to show us he will stand by his word.

– John M. Dobranski, Elmira, N.Y.

## Scouts in good hands

I was thrilled to read that Roy Williams had been named National Chief Scout Executive of the Boy Scouts of America ("Embattled Boy Scouts Moving Ahead," February). I knew Roy when he served the Boy Scouts in Rhode Island. I am confident in his ability to lead the Scouts through the difficult times they are now facing and to resolve the issue in the best interests of the boys, not what happens to be politically correct at the moment.

– Lon Jamison, Wickford, R.I.



Roy Williams

## Lousy pay indeed

I just read the article "Making the Connection" (February). A few of the author's comments hit close to home for me, especially the one about soldiers' lousy pay. While I served on active duty,

several of my fellow servicemen and I shared the belief that criminals in jail maintained a higher standard of living than we did. We based that on the fact that the criminal justice system spent three times our annual base pay on each prisoner.

– Michael C. Thompson, Border, Ark.

## Equal protection for all

Rep. Michael Capuano, D-Mass., believes hate crimes need special prosecution beyond existing local, state and federal statutes (Big Issues, "Is Hate-Crimes Legislation Necessary?" January). "Simply put, no person should live in fear because of his or her gender, race ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation," he says.

I agree. I also believe no person should live in fear because he or she supervises other workers, helps collect taxes, works for the U.S. Post Office, promotes protection of gun owners' constitutional rights, wears a U.S. military uniform while in or attending a parade, fells trees for a living, works in a women's clinic or performs animal research.

Why single out race and gender? The answer is clear: the political correctness of the moment and resulting votes. I couldn't help but notice that Capuano's example of a disability is "your son ... a limp ... birth injury," not "soldier ... facial burns and missing arm ... combat wound ... Vietnam."

– Otis F. Curtis, Brookings, S.D.

## Corrections

*Editor's note: The On Duty article "Raiders of WWII Marine Raiders Brought Home" (February) incorrectly identified U.S. Marine Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. Clyde Thomason.*

*The Veterans Update article "TRICARE Provides New Benefits" (March) listed incorrect Web addresses for TRICARE and Medicare. The correct Web addresses are [www.tricare.osd.mil/deersaddress/](http://www.tricare.osd.mil/deersaddress/) and [www.medicare.gov/basics/overview.asp](http://www.medicare.gov/basics/overview.asp).*

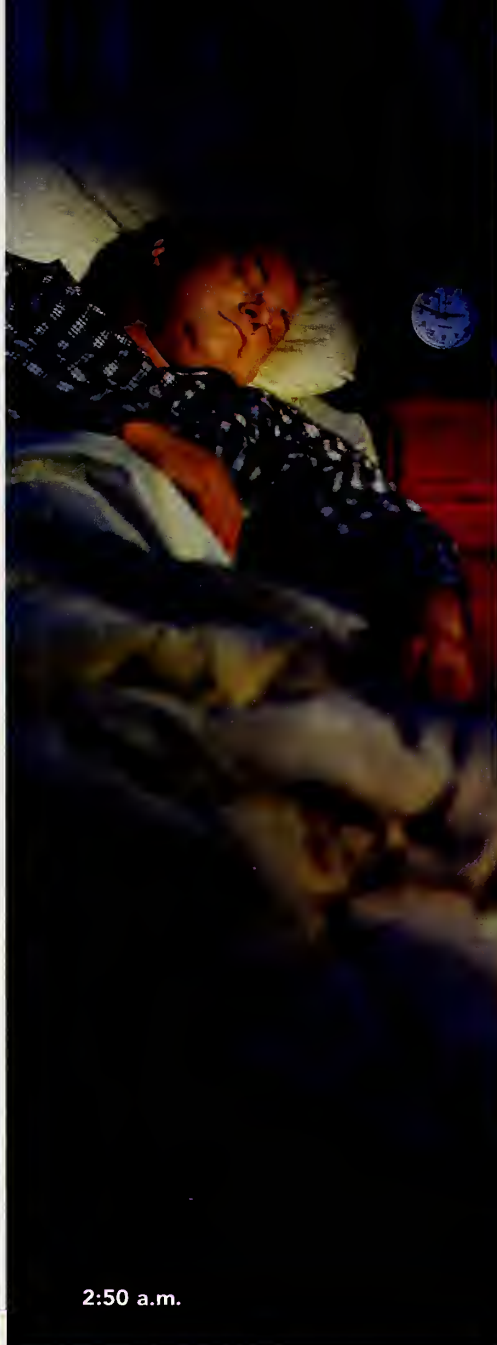
*Also, the article "Taiwan-Formosa Veterans Sought" listed an incorrect e-mail address for the Badge of Honor Association. The organization's correct e-mail address is [bohausea@peoplepc.com](mailto:bohausea@peoplepc.com), and its Web address is [www.taiwanvets.com](http://www.taiwanvets.com).*

*We apologize for the errors.*





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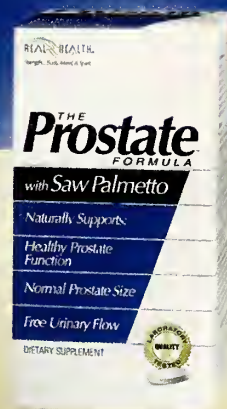


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# Remembering the roots of Memorial Day

**T**HE MEANING of Memorial Day permanently deepened for me after the Fourth of July 1953. On that patriotic day, I was flying over the Pacific with the 19th Bomb Wing of the 20th Air Force when someone handed me a telegram. The message stated that my brother, U.S. Army Pfc. Charles C. Smith, was killed in action June 18. The feeling I had at that moment I'll never be able to adequately describe or forget. Twenty-four days later, the shooting stopped.

My brother was one of more than 34,000 Americans whose supreme sacrifice halted the violent communist invasion and occupation of South Korea. And he was one among nearly 625,000 brave Americans who died fighting in a U.S. uniform during the 20th century.

Since the Vietnam War, thankfully, those dreaded telegrams have been coming fewer and farther between. Less than 1 percent of Americans killed in action during the 20th century fell after 1975, a statistic that is perhaps the greatest legacy of all for those like my brother. The downside is that today few Americans younger than 45 understand what Memorial Day really means.

**The Date Matters.** For too many Americans, the original meaning of Memorial Day has drifted away with the barbecue smoke. Taking a three-day weekend on whatever date the last Monday of May falls, more and more families regard this important patriotic holiday as little more than a swinging gate to summer vacation. Off to the mountains, beaches and theme parks they go.

The American Legion certainly has nothing against three-day weekends or summer vacations, but we do believe Memorial Day deserves its moment of traditional reflection at the same time each year. For those who don't remember, May 30 used to be the official date – Monday or not – to salute those who gave their lives in battle. Formerly known as "Decoration Day," the holiday's definition broadened over time to honor the memories of civilians and soldiers alike. That was fine, but once the date started jumping around on the calendar, too often

the services, prayers and parades for fallen soldiers became something to do if the fish weren't biting.

**The Birthplace of Memorial Day.** One place where the holiday's original intent remains unchanged is Waterloo, N.Y., which in 1966 was proclaimed by President Lyndon Johnson as the official birthplace of Memorial Day.

Shortly after the Civil War ended, a Waterloo druggist named Henry Welles collaborated with Union Gen. John B. Murray to organize a local tribute for the war dead. The program included processions to and from the cemeteries, military music, speeches, wreaths, crosses and bouquets. Of all the earliest such remembrances (and there were many to heal the Civil War's wounds), Waterloo's 1866 program most closely resembled Memorial Days to come.

A pristine village of about 5,300 in western New York's scenic Finger Lakes region, Waterloo still follows its original Memorial Day model, drawing thousands of visitors each year, even when it's not on a Monday. In 1966, to celebrate the occasion's centennial, a 22-room Memorial Day Museum opened to the public.

To Jim Lewis, a member of Waterloo's Warner VanRiper Post 435, the deeper meaning of Memorial Day does not get lost in the crowd. A U.S. Army medical corpsman during the Korean War, he routinely risked his life to save others who were wounded in battle. Many didn't make it. "A lot of people saw more than I did, but it still really hurts whenever I hear 'Taps,'" Lewis says. "You never lose that memory."

After the war, he came home to Waterloo and immediately joined The American Legion, which plays a major role in the village's big Memorial Day observances each year. Lewis' dedication, enthusiasm and leadership haven't wavered in more than 40 years. "I learned very quickly in Korea three words that meant a lot – duty, God and country," Lewis says. "I still live by those words."

This year, Waterloo recognizes Memorial Day on a Wednesday. Prayers, wreaths, flowers and "Taps" are planned



National Commander Ray G. Smith

at two different cemeteries. Gulf War, Vietnam, Korea and World War II veterans – along with Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts – will parade past the museum and attend an evening program at the Post. "There are no horses, no carnivals, no rock 'n' roll bands," Lewis says. "Everything is patriotic. A lot of politicians are invited here, but they're not here to promote their politics. It's our day, not theirs."

**A Tree of Many Roots.** Though officially proclaimed as Memorial Day's birthplace, Waterloo was not alone in its reverence for the dead after the smoke lifted from the battlefields of the Civil War.

The little village of Boalsburg, Pa., traces its Memorial Day lineage to October 1864. Many cities across the South also have Memorial Day roots that date back to the end of the Civil War. In all, some two-dozen communities have claimed to be the birthplace of Memorial Day.

The fact is that Memorial Day was not born so much in a particular place as in the collective hearts of 19th-century Americans feeling the same indescribable flood of emotions I felt on the Fourth of July 1953 in Korea. It's difficult to put into words what we should always remember to celebrate on Memorial Day. That's what makes it special, lest we forget.



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## DO YOU SUPPORT THE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY?

**Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho**



**NO** I opposed the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty last year, and if this damaging national-security issue is raised again, I will oppose it again. If I thought supporting the CTBT would make the threat of nuclear war disappear and give us all greater security from these lethal weapons, I would not hesi-

tate in giving my support.

Implementing this treaty would likely increase danger to U.S. citizens and troops in the field. Ratification would prohibit the United States from conducting explosive tests of nuclear weapons of any kind. This would endanger U.S. national security and weaken our military arsenal, limiting our ability to respond to new threats.

The center of U.S. defense policy is deterrence. Key to that deterrence is the credible threat of retaliation against those who would harm the United States and its citizens. This threat can only remain credible if our stockpile of weapons is reliable and modernized. The CTBT runs counter to this objective.

Our foreign policy cannot be based on a view of the world through rose-colored

***"Our foreign policy cannot be based on a view of the world through rose-colored glasses."***

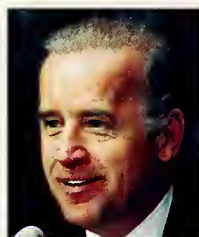
glasses. Decisions must be made on the assessment of the clear and present danger to the United States now and in the future.

The CTBT will do nothing to stop proliferation, even if testing is thwarted. This treaty is based on the flawed assumption that prohibiting nuclear testing will stop rogue nations from developing nuclear weapons. However, this assumption fails to acknowledge that rogue nations could likely be satisfied with crude devices that may or may not hit intended targets, killing innocent civilians.

Some would have you believe that if the United States stopped testing nuclear weapons, other countries would cease as well. Those of us who understand military affairs know that nations like North Korea, Libya or Iran would not end nuclear development just because the United States does.

The paramount question before us is whether ratification of the CTBT will increase our own national security. The sad truth is that it would be counterproductive and dangerous to America's national security. Moreover, the implication of ratifying the CTBT is ultimate nuclear disarmament of the United States. If the United States cannot maintain a safe and reliable stockpile of weapons and is barred from testing them, disarmament will be the de facto policy. The United States cannot afford this dangerous consequence.

**Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr., D-Del.**



**YES** There is one compelling reason to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty: because it is in our national interest. Who says? Gen. Henry Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified that all the chiefs favored U.S. ratification of the CTBT. His four predecessors as chairman – including Gen. Colin

Powell, now secretary of state – also supported ratification.

Why have top military leaders supported this treaty? Retired Gen. John Shalikashvili wrote: "The treaty is a very important part of global nonproliferation efforts and is compatible with keeping a safe, reliable U.S. nuclear deterrent. ... I fear that the longer entry into force is delayed, the more likely it is that other countries will move irrevocably to acquire nuclear weapons or significantly improve their current nuclear arsenal, and the less likely it is that we could mobilize a strong international coalition against such activities."

The CTBT bars all nuclear explosions, significantly constraining nuclear proliferation. A country may develop simple nuclear devices without testing but will lack confidence in them as

weapons. More importantly, without testing, countries cannot develop more sophisticated nuclear weapons such as thermonuclear weapons or weapons for ballistic missiles. President Bush says we have no need to test nuclear weapons or to develop new designs; it is clearly in our interest that other countries not test, either.

Opponents of ratification warn that others might cheat and that confidence in our own nuclear weapons might degrade over time. Frankly, some cheating might occur. No treaty is perfectly verifiable, but this treaty enhances our monitoring ability by giving us access to additional sensors around the world. Furthermore, the most feasible cheating scenarios could only be implemented by experienced nuclear powers and would not significantly advance their weaponry. Thanks to U.S. and international monitoring capabilities, there is little likelihood that a country with no experience could test a nuclear weapon covertly.

Maintaining our own weapons without testing is a challenge, but it's one we can meet.

Shalikashvili recommends improving U.S. monitoring capabilities and stockpile stewardship. I agree. We should do that this year. Then we should muster the courage to say "yes" to a treaty that will help combat nuclear proliferation.

***"Maintaining our own weapons without testing is a challenge, but it's one we can meet."***

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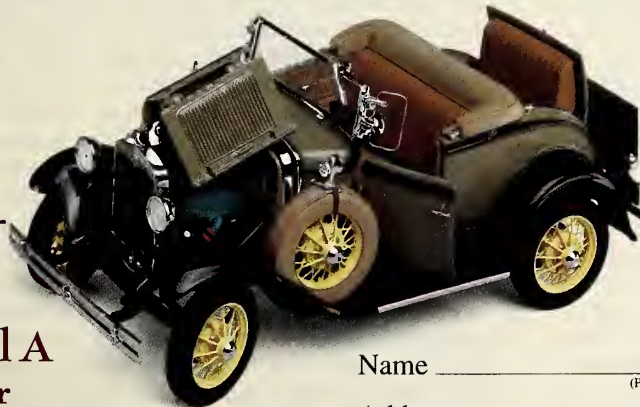


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# NO ORDINARY ELECTION

***What happened to Florida's absentee military ballots, and how do we prevent it from happening again?***

**By Alan W. Dowd**

**“W**e deal here not with an ordinary election, but with an election for the President of the United States.” So wrote Chief Justice William Rehnquist as he outlined his pivotal opinion in the case of *George W. Bush vs. Albert Gore Jr.* By a single vote, Rehnquist’s decision would shut down Florida’s problematic recount and mercifully end the 2000 election.

The Court’s 5-4 decision was a fitting conclusion to the 36-day election ordeal. In the five weeks between that moment – Judgment Day – and Election Day, Americans were repeatedly reminded of how precious and powerful a single vote can be. As the Florida Supreme Court declared during the post-election chaos, “The right to suffrage is the pre-eminent right, for without this basic freedom all others would be diminished.”

In other words, to paraphrase Chief Justice Rehnquist, the right to vote is not just any ordinary right – it is the essential, defining ingredient of a

democracy. Tragically, a handful of people lost sight of this during the bare-knuckle political brawl that marked Florida’s vote-counting spectacle. Their drive to win at all costs would disfranchise the very people who protect and preserve our own right to vote.

**Blame Game.** No one is blameless in the Florida election fiasco. Local election officials designed confusing ballots. Tens of thousands of Floridians ignored the rules when casting their ballots. Driven to be first, the television media outscoped themselves and prematurely called the state for Gore, only to later declare Bush the winner without bothering to check Florida’s automatic recount rules.

The state’s rickety election system nearly collapsed under the strain of the presidential photo finish, although Florida wasn’t alone: Days, and in some cases weeks, would pass before winners were declared in Oregon, where 0.4 percent was the winning margin; Iowa, where 0.3 percent separated the candidates; Wisconsin, where 0.2 percent separated them; or New Mexico, where a ballot-thin .09 percent separated victor and vanquished by just 546 votes.

Both campaigns played the legal card early and often. The disputed

Florida election spawned 52 lawsuits, tying up courthouses from Miami to Tallahassee to Atlanta to Washington, D.C. Gore surrogates are quick to point out that it was Bush who filed suit first, Nov. 11, when his lawyers tried to block Gore’s request for hand recounts of 1.8 million votes in southern Florida.

But that’s only part of the picture. It was Gore who first dispatched Warren Christopher and 75 lawyers to Florida’s 67 counties the morning after the election, as if it were some banana republic. Soon after, Bush sent James Baker and his own team of lawyers. Of course, those legal cards couldn’t have been played were it not for the Florida Supreme Court, which overstepped its constitutional bounds by extending the state’s certification deadline and, in effect, changing Florida’s election law midstream.

In its own words, Florida’s chastened high court conceded that “the development of a specific, uniform standard – to secure the fundamental right to vote throughout the state of Florida – should be left to the body we believe best equipped to study and address it, the Legislature.” If only the court had grasped that a month earlier.

And the list of those who played a part in Florida’s ordeal goes on. How-





**Broward County canvassing board member Judge Robert Rosenberg examines a disputed absentee ballot Nov. 25, 2000, at the Broward County Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.**

ever, when it comes to the state's military-absentee ballots, it's impossible to overlook the fact that Al Gore's lieutenants alone targeted and ultimately prevented hundreds of servicemen and women from being heard in the election of their commander in chief.

**Taking Aim.** In the first days of the Florida photo finish, the Gore team seemed committed to counting all the votes. Indeed, during the unpredictable overtime session of the 2000 election, it became the vice president's slogan. "It's important for the integrity of our democracy to make sure that every vote is counted," he observed, staking out the moral and political high ground in the process. Scolding Bush's lawyers for trying to short-circuit the hand recount process, Gore campaign chairman Bill Daley added, "The presidency of the United States should not be determined by technicalities. It needs to be

in election cases." All those involved, the seven justices intoned, should work "to reach the result that reflects the will of the people."

With the Florida Supreme Court's stirring words in mind, thousands of election officials went to work, imitating Johnny Carson's "Carnac the Magnificent" as they divined what each smudge, dimple and crease meant.

However, the same scrutiny given to the ballots of Florida's retirees, snowbirds and new citizens would not be given to the ballots of the military teenagers and 20-somethings who were defending them. Even as the definition of a vote was being stretched beyond recognition in south Florida, Gore's foot soldiers were taking aim at the overseas absentee ballots that would eventually decide the election.

The Gore team had good reason to be concerned about the overseas absentee ballots in general and the mili-

tary ballots in specific. As *Wall Street Journal* columnist John Fund reported months before the election, a sizable majority of overseas voters are Republican, perhaps as many as 80 percent.

The Florida Supreme Court agreed, adding momentum and legitimacy to Gore's postelection campaign. "The will of the people," the high court unanimously concluded, "not a hypertech-nical reliance upon statutory provisions, should be our guiding principle

in specific. As *Wall Street Journal* columnist John Fund reported months before the election, a sizable majority of overseas voters are Republican, perhaps as many as 80 percent. The military absentee vote traditionally leans toward the Republican candidate as well. And these late-arriving ballots can sometimes make or break a campaign.

"In 1996 and 1998," Fund said, "as many as 15 House races were close enough to be determined by absentee ballots." (Hence the GOP's frustration over reports that California intended to leave its 2.7 million absentee ballots uncounted. The reports turned out to be a hoax.)

Unpredictable as it was in other aspects, the 2000 election held true to form when it came to overseas ballots. According to the Florida Department of State, Bush netted 1,575 overseas ballots, while Gore won 836.

**Taking Out the Trash.** Long before those numbers were final, Gore strategists were exploring how to blunt Bush's inevitable edge in overseas ballots.

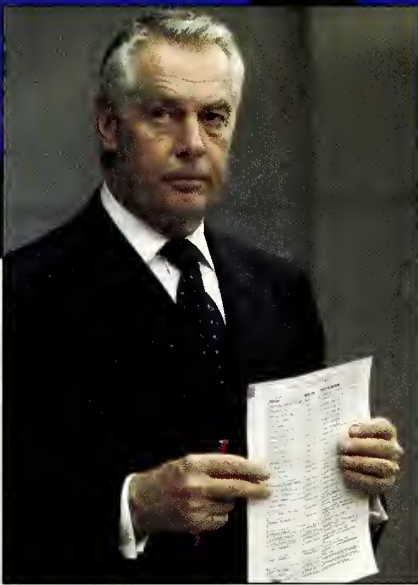
On Nov. 15, barely a week into the Florida recount, Tallahassee lawyer Mark Herron circulated his now-infamous memo to Gore's election monitors, who were stationed at canvassing sites across the state. Herron's memo amounted to a step-by-step guide on how to challenge and disqualify the overseas ballots that promised to play a pivotal role in determining the nation's 43rd President.

Directing his colleagues to comb the ballots for technical mistakes, Herron explained how an overseas ballot could

*"The right to suffrage is the pre-eminent right, for without this basic freedom all others would be diminished."*

*— Florida Supreme Court*





Republican attorney Fred Bartlit holds a list of rejected overseas ballots from Pasco County, Fla., Nov. 24, 2000, during a hearing in Leon County Circuit Court in Tallahassee, Fla. The Bush campaign filed suit against 13 county canvassing boards to accept all overseas military ballots.

be disqualified. Reasons ranged from the voter not officially requesting the ballot, to the voter failing to sign the outer envelope, to the voter failing to have a witness notarize the ballot, to a missing postmark.

The memo included a sample protest form, complete with a ready-made checklist of reasons for rejecting the ballot. Apparently, some technicalities were important enough to disqualify a vote, but only Herron and Daley knew which ones.

Gore supporters who defended the memo as an effort to preserve the integrity of the election were silenced by the missive's first paragraph and last page, which mentioned the armed forces by name and described the military's special postal designations. The memo's unambiguous intent was to weed out as many military ballots as possible.

For Gore and Daley, the memo was effective. For Florida's overseas voters — most of them men and women in uniform — it was devastating. Of the 4,017 military and overseas ballots mailed back to Florida, 1,527 were rejected under Herron's guidelines — a total of 38 percent.

But true to the Constitution they defend, America's servicemen and women uttered barely a whisper in protest, standing watch on the lonely outposts of freedom, even as the symbol of their

*"The presidency of the United States should not be determined by technicalities. It needs to be determined by the will of the people."*

— Bill Daley, Gore campaign chairman

freedom was tossed aside like trash. In Escambia County, home of Pensacola Naval Air Station, 112 of 272 votes were rejected. According to a *Miami Herald* investigation, "almost all [were] from military addresses." Duval County, which includes two Navy facilities, threw out 106 ballots. Orange County disqualified 117 and accepted only 30. Broward County tossed out 304 of its 396 overseas ballots. The *Herald* found that 246 of Broward's disqualified overseas ballots were military.

These weren't normal rejection percentages. In fact, thanks in large part to Herron's memo, the 2000 rejection rate was double the 1996 rate. Predictably, the most common reason election officials cited for rejecting a ballot was an absent postmark, the pettiest of technicalities.

It's petty because military mail is often shipped or airlifted without a postmark. Rushed by deadlines, stretched by special circumstances or limited by a lack of resources, APOs, FPOs and MPOs do their best just to get the mail

back to the United States as quickly as possible. Postmarks are often the least of their concern.

While Florida and a dozen other states require a postmark on overseas absentee ballots, Herron's memo didn't bother to mention that the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, which governs expatriate participation in federal elections, does not require ballots to be postmarked.

Herron and his colleagues apparently saw this disconnect between federal and state law as an opportunity to silence military voters. But according to Rep. Steve Buyer, R-Ind., who chairs a House subcommittee on military personnel, state law was irrelevant in the Florida absentee-ballot controversy.

"This is a federal election," Buyer explained during the recount dispute, "and the federal statute is what rules here."

Sadly, Florida election officials couldn't be persuaded. The damage had already been done.



A demonstrator holds an American flag and a sign during a rally in front of the Leon County Courthouse in Tallahassee, Fla., Dec. 5, 2000.



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Former Sen. Bob Dole speaks to Republican supporters about the ongoing recount of Florida's contested votes in front of the Broward County Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Nov. 24, 2000.

*"Any ballot from a man or woman in the military who is serving this country should be counted — period."*

— Sen. Zell Miller, D-Ga.

However, like the man who sows the wind and reaps a whirlwind, the damage would come spinning back at Herron and Daley.

Not only was the decision to go after the military ballots nakedly hypocritical given the Gore team's "every vote must count" mantra, it was disrespectful to the men and women in uniform. Targeting and trashing hundreds of military ballots did not sit well with the American people. In fact, just six days after Herron drafted his memo, Gore's disapproval ratings rose nine points in a CBS poll. He would never regain the trust or support of the slender majority he enjoyed before the memo went public.

Amid the public-relations storm, some of the loudest and fiercest criticism would come from Gore's fellow Democrats. Leading the charge was none other than Joe Lieberman, Gore's running mate. "I would give the benefit of the doubt to ballots coming in from military personnel," Lieberman explained on NBC's "Meet the Press," reportedly blindsiding Herron and other Gore operatives in the process.

Lieberman's comments opened the floodgates. Bob Butterworth, Florida's Democratic attorney general, promptly issued his own memo to local election officials, arguing that "no man or woman in military service to this nation should have his or her vote rejected solely due to the absence of a postmark."

Sen. Bob Graham, D-Fla., led a host of others in condemning the Gore cam-

paign's ill-thought attack on military ballots. But the bluntest comments came from Sen. Zell Miller, D-Ga., who said early on, "Any ballot from a man or woman in the military who is serving this country should be counted — period. I don't care when it's dated, whether it's witnessed or anything else. If it's from someone serving this country count it and salute them when you do it."

Despite Miller's verbal roundhouse and the media backlash, only 12 of Florida's 67 counties ultimately took a second look at their rejected military ballots.

**Lessons Learned.** Even so, all is not lost in the wake of Florida's military absentee ballot controversy. As the nation picks up the pieces, we're learning new lessons and relearning old truths.

The Pentagon's inspector general is preparing a report on the treatment of military ballots, the findings of which are expected to be refined into new policies. Moreover, among the slew of election reforms being considered in Congress are a pair of measures aimed squarely at protecting the votes of American servicemen and women.

Rep. Bob Riley, R-Ala., introduced his Armed Services Voting Act Jan. 3 — the earliest a bill could be dropped in the 107th Congress. Rep. David Vitter, R-La., wasn't far behind Riley, submitting his Armed Services Absentee Ballot Act just three weeks later. If Riley and Vitter have anything to say about it, Herron's checklist of technicalities will be a relic of the past. Both

bills would prohibit states from throwing out military absentee ballots "unless the state finds clear and convincing evidence of fraud."

"We must take action soon and solve this problem before another soldier, sailor, airman or Marine is left out of the voting process that ultimately selects their commander in chief," Riley said as he introduced his reform proposal.

Vitter agrees. "Trial lawyers and political operatives should not be allowed to systematically eliminate the legitimately cast ballots of servicemen and women," he said. "Under my bill, if men or women in the military made a good-faith effort to vote, their votes will count."

The only difference between the two bills is that Vitter's directs the Defense Secretary to develop a plan for establishing a uniform electronic voting system for service members on deployment.

Ironically, the Pentagon took its first, tentative steps into the brave new world of "e-voting" in November, when a handful of service members from around the world cast their votes via the Internet.

"It worked flawlessly," according to Polli Brunelli, director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program, which coordinated the landmark vote. Given what happened in Florida, online voting could be the wave of the future.

If nothing else, the sad turn of events in Florida has reminded Americans of every political stripe that the right to vote is no ordinary right. It's powerful yet fragile. And it's worth fighting for, especially when it comes to the votes of those who are fighting for us. □



Alan W. Dowd is a freelance writer living in Indianapolis.

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# DANGEROUS CROSSROADS

By Ben Barber

**A**S I RIDE in a cab slowly alongside the brick walls of the former American Embassy in Tehran where 52 Americans were captured in 1979 and held for 444 days, I see guard towers and anti-U.S. graffiti.

The embassy now serves as a base for the Revolutionary Guards, an Islamic militia that enforces the rule of the mullahs, or Islamic clerics, who cling to power despite growing internal opposition.

We stop at the entrance and I get out to take a picture, despite warnings from an Iranian companion. Suddenly, underneath a sign reading "Death to America," a door swings open and an armed man rushes out, waving me away. I don't argue and we speed away.

That came as a rude shock after five days of warm welcomes from almost every Iranian I'd met. "You're American?" they asked with surprise and delight. "My cousin lives in L.A.," said one. "We wish the Americans would come back here," said another.

They recalled the days before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, when the United States was a close ally and thousands of Americans lived and worked in Iran, training the army, maintaining the air force, pumping oil, building roads or advising the government.

But if Tehran's people in taxis and

Pictured above: Iranian reformist President Mohammed Khatami and hard-line Islamic Revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. AP Photo



**Iran stalls in reforms, clinging to rogue-nation status and hatred of America**



offices were extremely friendly toward a visiting American, in a village south of the city I discovered that some Iranians are extremely unfriendly toward their own government. A woman grabbed my arm while I was interviewing a village chief and hissed at me. "These people are liars and sell drugs to our children. Come with me; I'll tell you the truth."

A few blocks away, surrounded by her neighbors and eating the tiny, green grapes of the region, I heard how the mullahs and the police control everything and allow Afghan drug dealers to sell their cheap opium with impunity to children as young as 12.

"We hate these mullahs. They are so cruel," she said.

One Iranian cleric told a reporter the hatred of the ruling clergy is so intense that he removed his turban and cloak in order to get taxis to stop for him. For 20 years, militant religious zealots beat women if their hair showed from under their headscarves. A couple I met told me of spending their first date in jail after being arrested for having coffee together. Now, however, when zealots try to hassle boys and girls holding hands in trendy North Tehran, the people turn on the zealots and beat them up instead.

Iran is in great flux these days – the clerical regime that swept Shah Reza Pahlavi into the dustbin of history in 1979 was replaced by the Islamic revolutionary regime founded by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Because the pro-Western shah was admitted into the United States by President Carter for cancer treatment, militant Islamic students seized the U.S. embassy and humiliated Carter for more than a year by holding American diplomats, Marine guards and other Americans hostage until the day Ronald Reagan was inaugurated in 1980.

Now Iranians are fed up with the clerics. They want greater social freedom, a free press, freedom to question the religious leadership, and a piece of the economic pie, which is tightly controlled by the clerics and their allies – the bazaaris, or traditional merchants.

Iranians are also tired of being isolated internationally, feared as terrorists around the world. But this image is difficult to erase because Iran has sponsored terrorist killings of its opponents in Germany and France; it calls Egypt and Saudi Arabia "pro-Western lackeys." Iran also arms the Shiite minority

## ***"U.S. intelligence officials say that of all rogue nations, Iran poses the greatest threat to the United States because of its intense nationalistic and religious resentment of America."***

of Pakistan; it backs the Persian-speaking rebels in Afghanistan; it supports Islamic revolutionaries in Turkey and Azerbaijan, and it arms terrorist groups, such as the Hamas and the Islamic Jihad in the West Bank and Gaza, paying supplements to families of suicide bombers based on the number of Jews they kill.

Iran's friends appear to be oil companies around the world eager for a share of its huge petroleum exports. Other friends include Russia, China and North Korea, which sell Iran missiles and materials for nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. But Iran's constant harping on the Israeli-Palestinian struggle has worn thin. Several Iranians told me, when asked about the front-page articles about "Zionists" in the government press, "Who cares about this? We don't." It's how the government distracts the people from their unhappiness about how the mullahs control every aspect of their lives, one analyst in Tehran said.

Whoever wins the power struggle unleashed in Iran since reformists won the presidential election in 1997 will have great influence on U.S. and world interests. Iran is a growing, oil-rich country of 60 million people at the crossroads of

west and east – the place Alexander the Great, Marco Polo and others punched their tickets during 2,500 years of world war, travel and cultural movements. Iran was a great power 1,200 years before Islam was created by the prophet Mohammed in the seventh century A.D.

Iran remains a country with tremendous energy. Tehran bustles with self-motivated people who are busy, busy, busy – a marked contrast with the lethargy one often sees in neighboring South Asia and the Middle East. Everyone is doing something or going somewhere. The homes I visited were tidy and beautifully arranged, whether in a village or a modern apartment block. Iran has the potential to be a great regional power if it would give up its current role as a lonely, militant opponent of Western values and interests.

For the past 20 years, the country has been isolated from the West, guided by leaders who believe every other religion is wrong and evil. The revolutionary government is dedicated to spreading its own Shiite Muslim faith around the world. Because most of the world's 1 billion Muslims follow the Sunni branch of Islam, Iran is even



The main entrance at the former American Embassy in Tehran, where 52 American diplomats, Marine guards and others were held hostage 444 days from 1979-1981, is now a Revolutionary Guards base. Photo courtesy Ben Barber



***"Iran's greatest enemy is the secular West, and it has been searching for ways to obtain weapons of mass destruction to keep the West out of the Far East, which it hopes to dominate."***

more isolated from other Muslims. But the country's greatest enemy is the secular West, and Iran has been searching for ways to obtain weapons of mass destruction to keep the West out of the Near East, which it hopes to dominate.

The United States has focused on Iraq since Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990. But all the while, Iran has been busy striving to acquire missiles and nuclear weapons. The CIA considers Iran to be one of the most potent threats to the United States.

"Tehran strives to be a leader in the Islamic world and seeks to be the dominant power in the Gulf," where about half the world's oil exports originate, a 1997 Defense Department report stated. "The latter goals bring it into conflict with the United States."

Iran's search for weapons was first inspired by its devastating war with Iraq following a Hussein-led attack in 1980. The eight-year conflict, marked by missile attacks and the use of poisonous gas, left hundreds of thousands

dead and maimed in Iran. Only because of an earlier Israeli bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor did Hussein fail to build a nuclear bomb before that war, a weapon few doubt he would have used against a defenseless enemy.

Then Director of Central Intelligence John Deutch told Congress in 1996, "We judge that Iran is actively pursuing an indigenous nuclear-weapons capability." Later reports indicated Iran was obtaining nuclear technology and reactors from Russia and China. The limiting factor in using nuclear weapons is the necessity to produce, buy or steal the fissile material, such as enriched uranium or plutonium, needed to fuel a bomb. Deutch said Iran was eight to 10 years away from obtaining the bomb.

At the same time, Iran has bought from North Korea advanced missiles such as the No Dong and the Taepo Dong, which Iran calls Shahab, or "meteor." These missiles can reach as far as 2,500 miles. U.S. intelligence officials

say Iran, of all the rogue nations, poses the greatest threat to the United States because of its intense nationalistic and religious resentment of America. At a recent military display, a Shahab 3 missile bore a banner reading: "U.S. Can Do Nothing" and "Israel Would Be Wiped From The Map."

Why do the Iranian religious leaders hate America? In part, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright admitted last year, U.S. covert aid helped install the Shah by overthrowing Prime Minister Mohammed Mosadeq in 1953. Subsequent U.S. aid to the Shah during the next 25 years was seen by traditionalists and the clergy as interfering with and replacing Iran's culture and values with those of the West. Little doubt remains that Ayatollah Khomeini rose to power in 1979 on the shoulders of mass support by millions across the country. But after two decades of Islamic rule, the cure has become as painful as the original problem.

Iranians showed their displeasure with the rule of the conservative, hard-line mullahs by electing reformist cleric Mohammad Khatami as president in 1997. He was widely loved for his new, gentle approach. When hard-liners began to chant "Death to America" during a speech he was giving at Tehran University, Khatami – typical of his style – responded, "I prefer to speak of life than of death," drawing huge cheers from the crowd.

After years of somber, hard-line pressure, a breath of spring had come to the ancient land of Persia.

In February 2000, reformists swept elections to the Majlis, or parliament, crushing the hard-liners who lost all 30 seats to the reformers. The movement was not just political but had social aspects as well.

Women began showing a bit more hair at the edge of the scarves, which now boasted vivid colors instead of the universal black. Women also shortened their black cloaks, called "manteaus," to display bare feet and polished toenails. Boys and girls dared walk together in the streets and – in more liberal north Tehran – hold hands. A dozen reform newspapers appeared, supporting the new openness and criticizing corruption in the clergy, as well as the giant economic foundations through which the economy is controlled by the supreme religious leader.

Khatami stunned the world in 1998 by giving a lengthy interview to CNN.



A woman walks with her skis at the Dizan ski resort north of Tehran, Iran, in February 2000. On weekends, skiers dress in figure-hugging sports clothes on the slopes at Dizan. Iranians have long been used to Islamic inhibitions imposed by the ruling Islamic clergy, but there are signs that Iranians are willing to test the boundaries since the 1997 election of reformist President Mohammad Khatami.



during which he said he respected America's civilization and favored an informal cultural dialogue. At home, Iranian students flocked to lectures by philosopher Abdolkarim Soroush and other thinkers who began to carefully question the basis of the Islamic revolutionary government – the vali-ye faqih, or rule by the jurisprudent, which gives absolute final authority over everything to one man, the supreme religious leader Ayatollah Ali Khamaneh.

Appointed for life, Khamaneh controls the economy, judiciary, foreign policy, the army, the paramilitary Revolutionary Guards, the vigilante bassiji groups – in effect, everything. He is as powerful as a medieval king with divine right, and that is exactly how his supporters see the situation.

Despite the reform election victories, the hard-liners were not about to let public opinion, elections and a free press interfere with their conviction that they were right and had the right to enforce their will. They struck back, ousting key reformist allies of Khatami, including the interior minister and the Tehran mayor, who was jailed for five years. In November 1998, mysterious assassins, later traced to the security forces, killed five prominent liberal intellectuals. One suspect died in jail before he could tell who ordered the killings, and the journalist who exposed the story was arrested and received a 10-year sentence.

Then the judiciary, controlled by the supreme leader and not Khatami, began closing down the reform newspapers and jailing reporters and editors for insulting Islam and threatening to overthrow the Islamic Revolution. When students at Tehran University

I was seated in the Majlis' press gallery in August 2000 when the hard-liners drove the final nail into any illusions they would allow reformists – no matter how big their majority was in the elections – to question the power of the mullahs. It was the first legislative session since the reformists won their huge majority, and they were widely expected to introduce a press freedom law. Suddenly, one delegate stood up and asked why the press law was not on the agenda.

The head of the parliament said, "I thought we had agreed not to discuss the press bill. The supreme leader sent us a letter." Pandemonium broke out, with reformists asking if Ayatollah Khameneh had the right to change their agenda and the hard-liners shouting them down. "You must obey," one mullah screamed at the reformists. In the end, the press bill was dropped.

The next day, the last independent newspaper, *Behar*, or *Spring*, was ordered to shut down. A mob of 10,000 bassijis jammed the street in front of parliament, calling for the blood of any who oppose the supreme leader. "We see the hidden hand of America behind the reform press," said a 25-year-old political science student. "Our most important saying is 'Down With America.'"

When I noted that a majority of Iranians voted for the reformists, another bassiji said in a hostile tone, "Why do you Americans want us to exercise your democracy? You only see the world through your lens."



An Iranian hard-liner holds a picture of Islamic Revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ali Khameneh in front of a large portrait of Iranian reformist President Mohammed Khatami during a demonstration last year by pro-Khatami students. Protesters accused the hard-line Guardian Council of tampering with parliamentary election results at Tehran University. AP Photo

Most Iranians are terrified of the bassijis, some of whom wore white funeral shrouds to show readiness to die for the supreme leader and the Islamic revolution. The hostility they showed contrasted sharply with the warmth and good will I found in most other Iranians I met. Many Iranians believe a new revolution will soon explode in their country, so great is the pent-up desire for change.

However, for the moment, the hard-liners control all the levers of power and guide the ancient country toward a future of zealotry, anti-Americanism and nuclear weapons.



Ben Barber is a Washington Times correspondent who has covered the Middle East for more than 20 years.

Article design: Doug Rollison

***"Iran has the potential to be a great regional power if it would give up its current role as a lonely, militant opponent of Western values and interests."***

protested the press clampdown in July 1999. Ayatollah Khameneh unleashed the bassijis – militant, religious vigilantes – who attacked the students with clubs in the streets and in their dormitories. Police stood by until it was over and then arrested hundreds of the students, many of whom still remain in jail without the benefit of trial and under conditions of torture and isolation.



# VIETNAM

## Spinning the Legacy

By Fred Peck

**I**n the quarter century since the end of the Vietnam War, what have we learned? Has some of what we have learned been responsible for our successful strategies in the Gulf War and in the brutally effective air campaign in Serbia? Has it kept us out of potential quagmires, from taking that first step on a slippery slope that might have gotten us embroiled in another war of national liberation?

Today's top military leaders and those of the recent past cut their teeth on the crucible of Vietnam. Our resounding military successes of the 1990s are due, in great measure, to what those senior officers learned from their experiences in Vietnam and the years that followed. Victory in the military arena is finally theirs; but have they, and we as a nation, lost the Vietnam War again on the social front? Have we allowed the valor of millions of Vietnam veterans to be taken from them?

"The path to hell is littered with the bleached bones of lieutenants who forgot their local security," was a phrase I heard continuously as I trained to be a Marine infantry platoon leader in the early 1970s. It is one of the immutable lessons learned on battlefields since time immemorial — not unlike "Never become involved in a land war in Asia,"

A member of Company C, 75th Ranger Battalion flies aboard a helicopter bound for a South Vietnamese airfield in March 1970. America's view of Vietnam War vets has been influenced by war movies such as "Apocalypse Now." Photo Courtesy National Archives



a dictum uttered in the movie "The Princess Bride." It is a painful reminder that some lessons must be constantly reviewed or they will be forgotten.

With more than 25 years of hindsight, what have we learned from one of America's most unpopular and most misunderstood wars? Have we learned the right lessons from a conflict that lasted for more than a decade and cost the lives of more than 50,000 Americans?

**Let the Military Run the War.** The war fought 10 years ago in the Persian Gulf was marked by political leadership in the White House and Pentagon that set goals and objectives for their military leadership, and then stepped back and let them do the job. There could be no more stark contrast between philosophies of warfare than those of the Vietnam and Gulf Wars. In the former case, Washington politicians and bureaucrats managed the war. In the latter, the military was given a job and the resources it needed, then allowed to do it. The goal was simple: Win.

Imagine what a difference there might have been if America had taken five or six months to amass a half-million strong force in South Vietnam back in 1965. Then, when everything was in place, a six-week-long bombing campaign would be unleashed to destroy the industry and infrastructure of North Vietnam, followed by an invasion that had Hanoi as its objective. Would the war have been over in 1965?

It's not fair to make that kind of supposition, given all the benefits of hindsight. The Kennedy administration came to power in 1961, recapturing Congress and the White House from the Republicans by promising to be tough on communism. President Eisenhower had been elected in the waning months of the Korean War and only four years after China's fall into the communist camp, partly because Americans wanted a strong leader who would stand up to the communist threat.

Unfortunately for President Kennedy, his first experience at battling communism was at the Bay of Pigs. That was followed by the Cuban missile crisis, which the public perceived as a victory, in that it at least accomplished the removal of communist missiles just 90 miles off our shores.

**How America Got Involved.** The first significant U.S. involvement in Vietnam began during World War II, expanded in the 1950s as the defeated French pulled

***"The Baby-boomer generation is divided along a fault line of those who served and those who didn't."***

## COMMENTARY

out during the Eisenhower years, then began to grow during the Kennedy administration with the dispatching of American advisors. Kennedy could not stand by and watch South Vietnam fall. The Democrats certainly did not want to be tagged with "losing" Vietnam, but the Kennedy administration also had more pressing issues on its agenda. The fear of massive Chinese intervention was foremost in their minds. The hope was that this conflict would remain a manageable and relatively low-cost containment operation.

We all know now that was not to be. Soon after President Johnson took office, the war and the stakes began to escalate. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and the Johnson administration still hoped to manage rather than fight a war in Southeast Asia. The demands of Johnson's "Great Society" program and the rapidly worsening racial strife in America drew attention elsewhere, at least for the moment.

The Vietnam War occurred during a period of tremendous social upheaval in America. To understand and learn from

Vietnam, one must first understand what was transpiring in American society and around the world at the time. There are military lessons to be learned from this war, but equally important societal issues linger with us to this day. Many of our senior military leaders, including Secretary of State Colin Powell, came of age on the battlefields of Vietnam.

Many of our senior political leaders over the past decade had the opposite experience. Behind shields of college deferments, they either managed to avoid service through legitimate means while proclaiming to support it, or they actively protested American involvement in the war and consciously resisted serving in the military.

Former Secretary of the Navy and highly decorated Marine Corps veteran of Vietnam James Webb notes in an article in *The American Enterprise Magazine* ("Heroes of the Vietnam Generation," September 2000) that the baby-boomer generation is divided along a fault line of those who served and those who did not. Webb is not the first observer to point out that most of America's current leaders in politics, education (particularly higher education), and the news and entertainment media did not



A member of the 173rd Airborne Division calls medics to a wounded comrade. African-Americans represented 12.6 percent of the U.S. military during the Vietnam War.





Army National Guard played an important role in the Vietnam War. Indiana Army National Guard soldiers of Company D, 151 Infantry, such as those depicted in this artist's drawing, were awarded 510 medals for valor and service during the war. Contrary to popular myths that most soldiers were draftees, volunteers made up 67 percent of the forces in the Vietnam War. DoD

serve alongside their peers in the Vietnam War. Indeed, many speak of a dangerous gap in civil-military relations.

Was that just the breaks of the game? Those who didn't serve in the Vietnam War were often among the most politically and socially active. Is it not natural to assume that they would have risen to the top in the fields of politics, government, education and media? Perhaps it is, but the consequences for society may be far greater than we imagine. That part of the generation that

eration," and deservedly so. Likewise, belated recognition was given to those who fought in the "forgotten war" in Korea. Meanwhile, veterans of the Vietnam "conflict" languish in the historical dungeon, their story interpreted by some whose agenda demands the denigration of their service and their sacrifice.

This past Veterans Day, I spoke separately to the assembled classes of a local high school and middle school. I'm familiar with these students through speaking to current-history classes, teaching

Junior Achievement classes to them, and working with theater and choral groups. Today's students have no inborn

The Fourth Of July" and "Platoon." They think they know what it was like. What they are told, though, comes almost totally from those who resisted, those who protested and from those who avoided service. Recently, the Department of Defense reported that in its survey of young men and women considering service in the armed forces, Stanley Kubrick's "Full Metal Jacket" was cited as the most influential film they had seen.

**Vets In High Places.** Despite the presence of countless examples of successful Vietnam War veterans, the popular conception of a Vietnam War vet is that of a loser, a drug addict, a baby killer, or someone too stupid to have avoided serving. I told the high school students that in my role as a Marine Corps public affairs officer, I was contacted every Veterans Day by reporters asking me to help them find Vietnam War veterans to interview. Invariably, the dialogue went along these lines:

Reporter: "I'd like your help finding some Vietnam War veterans to interview for Veterans Day."

Me: "Sure. How about the founder of Federal Express, or a guy who came back from Vietnam and started as a runner on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange and now owns a seat on the Exchange?"

Reporter: "That's not quite what

***"Many of our senior political leaders, including Secretary of State Colin Powell, came of age on the battlefields of Vietnam."***

did not serve now controls the agenda for interpreting the Vietnam War to future generations of Americans, and they have not hesitated to put their spin on it. The greatest lesson of the Vietnam War remains hidden behind their web.

**Negative Impressions.** The 50th anniversary of the end of World War II brought a plethora of books, articles, motion pictures and television programs extolling the virtues of the "greatest gen-

bias against the Vietnam War; they know only what they see, hear and read about it in the popular media. It is as far removed from them as the Peloponnesian War. Even the Gulf War is ancient history — today's high school seniors were in second grade when it was fought.

Their image of the war in Southeast Asia, gleaned from popular culture, is almost entirely negative. They have seen movies such as "Apocalypse Now," "The Deer Hunter," "Born On

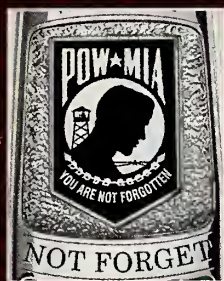




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I'm looking for."

Me: "How about the owner of Beverly Hills Savings and Loan, or the CEO of Pizza Hut?"

Reporter: "No, I was kind of looking for a homeless vet or maybe one in a drug rehab program."

That's the way it always went — always. No one wanted to hear about Vietnam War vets who didn't fit their template of loser. The facts easily prove Vietnam War veterans are as well-adjusted as veterans of previous wars, and even as successful or more successful than their peers who did not serve. But no one wants to listen. They "know" that Vietnam War vets are the dregs of society. They "know" that they were drafted from the lower rungs of society and were disproportionately young, poor and minorities. They "know" Vietnam War vets were just cannon fodder who returned home addicted to drugs and suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. That's what they've been told over and over again. Why should they believe otherwise?

**The Truth by Numbers.** What is the truth about Vietnam War veterans? A 1980 Harris Poll showed that 91 percent of Vietnam War veterans were glad they'd served their country, 74 percent enjoyed their time in the service and 89 percent agreed with the statement that "our troops were asked to fight in a war which our political leaders in Washington would not let them win."

***"No one wanted to hear about Vietnam War vets who didn't fit their template of loser."***

Nine million men and women served in the military during the Vietnam War, 3 million of whom went to the Vietnam theater. Contrary to popular myths, two-thirds of these were volunteers; only a third were draftees. Contrast that with the fact that two-thirds of those who served in World War II were drafted. That is not to malign those who served in World War II, including my father and my uncle. It's just to point out the fallacy of two myths: In World War II, the vast majority of those who served were volunteers; in Vietnam, the vast majority were draftees. That's not so.



President Lyndon Johnson decorates a soldier during a trip to Vietnam at the height of the war. General William Westmoreland flanks the President.

Consider these facts as reported by James Webb: In World War II, the average age of those who served was 25, of which 24 percent were high-school graduates and 7 percent were college graduates. In the Vietnam War, the average age was 23, where 79 percent were high-school graduates, and 20 percent were college graduates. Volunteers made up 67 percent of the forces in the Vietnam War but suffered 77 percent of the casualties and 73 percent of deaths.

Webb also debunks the myth repeated frequently today that minorities suffered a disproportionate level of the casualties.

In fact, Webb and many others have reported that African-Americans were 13.1 percent of the population during

the Vietnam War, and they represented 12.6 percent of the Armed Forces. Contrary to conventional wisdom, they did not suffer disproportionate casualty in Vietnam — 12.2 percent of those killed or wounded were African-American. Still, the myths remain.

**Telling the Story Right.** Militarily, tactically and strategically, we learned a great deal from the war in Vietnam. On the social front, however, it appears we have lost the war again and almost without a fight. In my hometown of Gunnison, Colo., I

pointed out to the students on Veterans Day that their county sheriff was a Vietnam War vet, as was the owner of a local construction business, an architect, two college professors, a lumber store manager and one millionaire venture capitalist.

Once it was popular to speak of winning the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people if we hoped to win the war. Now it behooves all veterans to win the hearts and minds of the current generations, if we are finally to "know" the most important lesson of the Vietnam War here at home: When their country needed them, Vietnam War veterans answered the call. The alternative is to continue to let the likes of Oliver Stone, Francis Ford Coppola and Stanley Kubrick tell their story — and tell it wrong.

The vast majority of Vietnam War veterans served willingly and faithfully, and they deserve the recognition and gratitude of their country just as fully as do the veterans of our other wars. It is our duty to tell our children and our grandchildren that Vietnam War veterans served with honor. That's a duty I don't take lightly — nor should you. □



*Fred Peck, a retired Marine colonel and graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, served as senior spokesman for Operation Restore Hope in Somalia.*

Article design: Doug Rollison



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# Walls of WAR

*Art of the  
armed forces  
weaves  
powerful  
imagery  
through the  
Pentagon.*

**By Jeff Stoffer**  
Associate Editor

**E**VERY WEEKDAY half-hour between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., a crowd gathers just beyond the Metro subway entrance to the Pentagon and listens closely. In ceremonial dress uniform, an active-duty Honor Guard member – rotationally a soldier, sailor, airman, Marine or Coast Guardsman – recites the rules. No video cameras. No tape recorders. No photographs of personnel or office interiors. Stay in the middle of the corridor and do not lag behind. If you need to use the restroom, please do so now because there will be no detours.

After all, this is the Pentagon.

What you can't see on the public tour stirs the imagination almost more than

what you can. About 100,000 visitors a year are whisked through just one mile of the 17.5 corridor miles inside the high-security fortress of the U.S. Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In just over an hour, curious on-lookers pass dozens of office doors – some tantalizingly open a crack – hallways and stairways, display cases and windows offering a view of the courtyard hot-dog stand employees call “ground zero.” And every step of the way, what you want to see more is priceless art that portrays military life and combat through the eyes of artists from all five branches of the armed forces.

**Art of Land, Air and Sea.** The Pentagon's pantheon of art is a collaborative effort among the branches, each of which provides just a fraction of its larger collection for display in the offices and cor-



Top: “James K. Paulding,” Secretary of the Navy from July 1, 1838, to March 3, 1841, by Rembrandt Peale, is among many masterpieces in portraiture hanging in the Pentagon. Navy Art Collection  
Above: From the Wright Flyer to the F-22, virtually every type of

military aircraft appears in “Wings Through Time” by R.E. Bell. In four distinct segments, the piece illustrates a century of aircraft buildup and reduction, along with colors to match the times. Bell is the former chief of Air Force Headquarters Graphics in the Pen-





Left: "Marine Mud and Misery, France 1918" is the title of this 1987 acrylic painting by U.S. Marine Corps Col. Charles Waterhouse. German hand grenades beside the rifleman indicate the trench was overtaken from the enemy. The work of Col. Waterhouse, who served with the 5th Marine Division during World War II, has been widely published. US Marine Corps Art Collection

Below: "Balloon Barrage" by Alexander Brook. Barrage balloons tethered by long cables were used during World War II as a defense against low-elevation air attack. Brook was a realist whose still-lives, landscapes and paintings of women placed him among the great painters of the time. In 1930, he won second prize to Picasso at the Carnegie Institute International Exhibition of Modern Art. U.S. Army Art Collection

Bottom: "The Last Two," an oil painting by Dino Sistilli, portrays the U.S. Coast Guard at work. Here, the last two people on board a disabled ship prepare to be airlifted to safety. U.S. Coast Guard Art Collection



ridors of U.S. military headquarters. Altogether, the five branches manage more than 45,000 works of art, which hang at bases, posts, galleries and museums worldwide or go on tour for special events. Most of the original work is kept in climate-controlled storage facilities at various locations around Washington,

D.C. And in order to bring more of this public-owned art before the eyes of the public, military art directors and curators are scrambling to install digital galleries on the Web. That's a lot of hours at the scanner.

The Air Force is the only branch whose art department and collection are housed inside the Pentagon. So it may come as little surprise that the Air Force – with about 40 percent of its collection on display in the building – is better represented than any other branch in the Pentagon. Down nearly every corridor, precisely detailed and technically accurate bombers, fighters and attack planes navigate richly hued skies in paintings so realistic they appear three-dimensional. Moodier pieces portray the tedium of captivity in a POW cell or a shot-down flight crew's frantic attempt to flag down a rescue helicopter. These are the works of artists who've been there.

Five societies of aviation illustrators and artists from across the United States



tagon. He retired in 1999 after a career in Air Force graphics, illustration and communications that began in 1960. Air Force Art Collection



have kept a steady stream of fresh work coming into the Air Force collection since 1951. For selected society members, expenses-paid research trips, sometimes into combat zones, are arranged by the Air Force. Artists like Marbury Brown, who flew behind enemy lines to paint scenes from Grenada, and Keith Ferris, a pioneer among modern aviation artists who has flown in nearly every type of Air Force craft, transform their experiences into paintings steeped with realism. In return for access privileges, the artists are expected to produce something for the collection.

"There's no guarantee they'll donate anything," Arnold says. "But you can count on it."

The U.S. Coast Guard has a similar arrangement. Drawing from artists in New York City's Salmagundi Club, the Coast Guard has amassed about 2,000 pieces of original art in the past 22 years. The New York club empanels a committee that selects art worthy of donation to the main collection.

"We really don't care to have any of the surrealist art," says John Thorne, community relations branch chief of the Coast Guard in Washington, D.C. "You look at this art and say, 'Wow, there's the Coast Guard at work.' The idea of the program is to show what the men and women of the Coast Guard do every day. Every time there's a hurricane, there's a Coast Guard unit out there offshore risking their necks to save fellow human beings."

The 73 Coast Guard paintings in the Pentagon closely follow that criteria, with detailed rescue scenes, illegal drug seizures and various air, ice and sea maneuvers. The art tells a story that can't practically be told any other way. "It's kind of difficult to hold a camera still and keep it dry in a hurricane," Thorne says.

**Paintings by the Numbers.** From an

**Right: "Score Another For The Subs" by Thomas Hart Benton was a gift to the Navy from Abbott Laboratories, which commissioned artists during World War II primarily to illustrate wartime medical activities. Navy Art Collection**



office building in downtown Washington, curator Renée Klish keeps track of about 13,000 pieces in the Army Art Collection. All the work is indexed and organized in color-coded three-ring binders shelved in her office/gallery. The originals – which include room-size controversial captured art commissioned by Adolph Hitler during World War II – are secured in a humidity-controlled room that is kept dark most of the time.

Less than 8 percent of the Army's collection is in the Pentagon, Klish says, noting that it takes at least three stars to get an original in your office. "We are very picky about what offices original artwork can be in," she says. "We're tightening up on what art can go out and where it goes. And anything that changes location must be recorded that day."

Jack Dyer, curator for the U.S. Marine Corps collection, says he won't let an original painting hang in a hallway at the Pentagon out of concern an accident might happen. Only the highest-ranking Marines are privy to originals – rather than salon-quality reproductions – from the 7,412-piece collection under his supervision.

With about 17,000 pieces, the Navy has the largest and oldest collection among the branches. Originals hanging in the Pentagon date back to the early 1800s, some by famous artists like Rembrandt Peale (known for his 1795 "Port-hole Portrait of George Washington"), regionalist Thomas Hart Benton ("Score







Above: "Enterprise on Yankee Station" by R.G. Smith is a breath-taking example from the two-tour Vietnam War combat artist and aircraft engineer. Navy Art Collection

Another for the Subs") and R.G. Smith ("Enterprise on Yankee Station").

But in the Pentagon, the signatures aren't nearly as awesome as the images, most of which were burned into the souls of combat veterans and front-line troops. The bulk of the Army and Marine Corps art is the work of active-duty personnel.

During the past century, the Army has been most consistent among the branches about assigning art details to active-duty troops. That all started during World War I when a unit of eight artists from the Corps of Engineers was assigned to document activities of the American Expeditionary Forces in France.

"The mandate was that they were not to be the portrait painter for the commanding general," Klish says. "They were to paint what they saw in the style and medium they chose." The body of work that emerged from that unique as-

## The Pentagon: A city inside a building

Among the world's largest of-office buildings, the Pentagon has three times the floor space of The Empire State Building and could house the entire U.S. Capitol in just one of its five sides. Here, according to the Department of Defense, are just a few measurements from this full-figured structure:



**6,636,360:** Gross square feet of floor area

**16:** Parking lots

**284:** Restrooms

**583:** Acres of land area

**77:** Height of building, in feet

**921:** Length in feet of each outer wall

**5:** Number of floors

**7.1:** Acres of glass surface

**17:** Number of War Department buildings consolidated by construction of the Pentagon in January 1943.

**7:** Number of years it took the War Department to return its \$83 million construction investment.



Left: "Baseball" by Aaron Borhod exhibits the Army's willingness to let artists concentrate on topics other than combat. "That I was allowed to paint at all during those hectic times proved to be the greatest gift of all," Borhod wrote in his autobiography. U.S. Army Art Collection



Above: "1st Division Command Post Moving Forward" by Col. H. Avery Chenoweth is one of few U.S. Marine Corps originals hanging in the Pentagon. The painting, which hangs in the Commandant of the Marine Corps' Special Conference Room, captures the fire-blackened skies from burning oil fields as Marine ground forces overtake Iraqis in Kuwait Feb. 24, 1991. U.S. Marine Corps Art Collection





**Above: "Tarawa" was one in a series of 1945 South Pacific combat paintings by Sgt. Tom Lovell. U.S. Marine Corps Art Collection**



**Left: "The Bridge Busters" by Randy W. Green represents the 397th Bombardier Group whose attacks on bridges, weapon sites, airfields and coastal defenses were essential for victory in World War II. U.S. Air Force Art Collection**

signment now hangs in the Smithsonian Institute and established an Army art tradition that continues today.

In 1943, a War Art Advisory Committee that included painter/sculptor George Biddle and author John Steinbeck selected 42 artists – 23 active-duty soldiers and 19 civilians – to document World War II for the Army. However, only four months after the War Art Unit received its orders, Congress withdrew funding of the program. Active-duty artists were given more strategic military assignments, and Life magazine commissioned most of the civilians as illustrators to keep the project alive.

In 1960, Life turned those works over to the Army on the stipulation that they only be displayed in public places. Many of the pieces can now be seen on the Pentagon tour, including work by Tom Lea of El Paso, Texas, later a renowned western painter and writer who, as a Life artist, stormed the beaches at Peleliu. Peter Hurd of New Mexico, who went on to earn acclaim for southwestern landscape painting, also was among the World War II Life artists.

Army art units were later deployed in

Vietnam and the Persian Gulf with the same orders of free expression. "The Army did not stifle creativity," Klish says.

The Navy collection has been generated from a broad variety of sources. Works from uniformed sailors in the Korean War, civilians in Vietnam, commissioned portraits and private donations create a tapestry of images in Building 67 of Washington Navy Yard that traces both the history of the Navy, and of art, in the past two centuries.

"We consider the collection a primary documentary source," says Gale Munro, curator of the Navy Art Collection. "And we're processing it as fast as we can." By that, she means scanning slides, negatives and reproductions of the art for exposure on the Web.

The Navy and the Coast Guard lead the branches in that effort. About 600 Navy paintings can be found online at [www.history.navy.mil](http://www.history.navy.mil). Coast Guard art can be viewed at [www.uscg.mil/general.html](http://www.uscg.mil/general.html). The Air Force and

Army also are scanning their collections and writing captions for Web surfers. In time, all the curators hope to complete these electronic archives so people who wish to see the art won't have to hunt for it around the world, wait for a traveling exhibit or take a whirlwind tour of the Pentagon. "We want it to be seen," says the Air Force's Arnold. "It is, after all, publicly owned art."

To the 23,000 people who work in the Pentagon, the art serves a public purpose whether it's on open display or not. The scenes of war, heroes, airplanes and battleships elicit pride among all those who pass by. Gen. John W. Handy, Air Force Vice Chief of Staff, says, "These works not only capture the heritage of our military, but equally important, they inspire new generations to continue the proud tradition of military service to our nation. It's great to have the opportunity to see this wonderful artwork every day." □

*Article design: Holly K. Soria*



**"Waiting Passengers" by Reginald Marsh demonstrates the artist's keen eye for detail. A social realist of the 1930s and '40s, Marsh often painted from on-site sketches. U.S. Army Art Collection**





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# Perilous

*Is the United States  
setting itself up for  
another Pearl Harbor?*

By Frank Gaffney Jr.

**O**N MEMORIAL DAY, a film depicting the day President Franklin D. Roosevelt correctly predicted would "live in infamy," will open around the country. Images of Japanese Zeros and dive-bombers strafing Americans and destroying their ships and aircraft will soon fill movie theaters. "Pearl Harbor" will be more than entertainment. It will serve as a powerful reminder of the grave dangers that can arise when this nation fails to recognize and respond appropriately to developments overseas that threaten vital interests — and even physical security.

How much more infamous would it be if the United States were to make that perilous mistake yet again? The complacency evident in official circles and among the public during most of the past decade is ominously reminiscent of mistakes made roughly 60 years ago. In particular, several symptoms and phenomena that marked the period prior to America's entry into World War II are re-emerging. As a result, we may be at considerable risk of another surprise Pearl Harbor-style attack. Unfortunately, the next one could well entail levels of physical and human destruction that would make the "Day of Infamy" look like a day at the beach.

**An Axis of Authoritarian Foes.** With hindsight, it is clear that the "Pact of Steel" between Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan was a precursor to Pearl Harbor.

Tokyo's determination to dominate its "East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere" paralleled Hitler's lust for *lebensraum* and Mussolini's desire for a new Roman empire. The correlation of forces represented

An aerial view of the USS *Arizona* Memorial serves as a reminder of the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. ImageBank photo



# Parallels

by the Axis powers in 1941 emboldened the Japanese to believe they could actually eliminate the American forces and smaller European colonial units that might interfere with the realization of the emperor's grand design.

Today, America's two most formidable potential adversaries – Russia and China – have forged what they call a “strategic partnership.” Pursuant to this arrangement, they appear to be collaborating in a number of areas with worrisome implications. Pre-eminent among these is the Kremlin's sale to Beijing of an array of advanced weapons designed by the Soviet/Russian military-industrial complex for one reason alone: to kill Americans.

In recent months, the People's Republic of China has ordered and, in some cases, taken delivery of destroyers equipped with deadly supersonic, sea-skimming and nuclear-armed “Sunburn” missiles; super-quiet Kilo-class submarines with an array of formidable high-speed underwater torpedoes and anti-ship missiles; SU-27 and SU-31 front-line Russian fighter aircraft; and T-80 main battle tanks. The Kremlin also appears to be assisting China with its effort to effect a wholesale modernization and rapid expansion of ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs. In addition, Russian cooperation is greatly improving China's ability to access and utilize outer space as a future theater of military operations, with profound implications for American military and commercial interests.

To be sure, Putin's Russia is not Nazi Germany any more than Jiang Zemin's China is Tojo's Imperial Japan.

## COMMENTARY

Still, the PRC remains a communist dictatorship, free and willing to utilize the coercive powers at its disposal to subjugate its people. For its part, contemporary Russia is in transition; the chaotic days of economic privation and political instability that called to mind Germany's Weimar era are rapidly giving way to a period of relative domestic tranquility and prosperity, bought at a price of growing authoritarianism under the heavy hand of Putin, a career KGB officer.

Regrettably, both governments seem tempted to engage in the sort of social engineering, using purported and/or manufactured external threats to justify internal repression, that marked the Axis powers' efforts to enhance their legitimacy and assure their continued control at home. It is

particularly noteworthy in this regard that the Chinese have taken to describing the United States as “the main enemy” in military doctrine and writings, speeches to the party cadre and public propaganda broadcasts.

Worse yet, in recent years PRC officials have on several occasions warned that China would be willing to trade American cities – including Los Angeles by name – for Chinese ones if necessary to defend their sovereign claim to Taiwan. In this way, they actually served notice to the United States of a possible future Pearl Harbor, presumably featuring a deadly nuclear-armed missile-delivered attack on a major U.S. population center.

A further danger arises from the fact that the Moscow-Beijing axis is not only contributing materially to the danger of such a Chinese attack. Both the Russians and Chinese are actively helping the worldwide proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and long-range missile technology that can be used by their rogue state clients against American forces, interests and, in the not-too-distant future, territory.

### A Military Spread Too Thin.

In retrospect, it is common to see in the military weakness brought on by the wholesale dismantling of the American armed forces following World War I a vacuum of power that contributed materially to the global cataclysm that engulfed the planet starting in 1939.

We are much less able, however, to appreciate the potential implications associated with the diminution in the size, power-projection capabilities, readiness, tech-

*“PRC officials have warned that China would be willing to trade American cities – including Los Angeles by name – for Chinese ones if necessary to defend their sovereign claim to Taiwan. In this way, they actually served notice to the United States of a possible future Pearl Harbor.”*



nological superiority and esprit de corps of the U.S. military since the end of Operation Desert Storm. These changes have been brought about, in part, by a low level of investment in our armed forces that – expressed as a percentage of gross domestic product – has not been seen since before Pearl Harbor.

Certainly, by virtually any measure, the American military is in far better shape today than it was at the time of Pearl Harbor. For instance, our troops are not being obliged to train with broomsticks rather than rifles, as they did before World War II. On the other hand, the cumulative effects of 10-plus years of inadequate investment in maintaining the readiness of today's forces and providing for that of tomorrow is taking its toll. Ships and armored fighting vehicles that cannot train for want of fuel, aircraft that cannot fly because of a lack of spare parts and helicopter fleets that are grounded over concerns about their safety translate into operators unprepared to enter combat and survive, let alone prevail.

Some seek comfort in the fact that, for all its deficiencies, the U.S. military is still vastly superior to any other in the world today. This is indisputably true, but perhaps dangerously misleading – if not, in some respects, actually irrelevant.

Increasingly, prospective foes –

*"The Kremlin's sale to Beijing of advanced weapons designed by the Soviet/Russian military-industrial complex is for one reason alone: to kill Americans."*



A captured Japanese photograph offers a glimpse of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

most especially Communist China – are seeking asymmetric means of leveling the battlefield. To a degree unimaginable at the time of the original Pearl Harbor, even relatively impoverished and technologically backward nations may be able to use techniques such as information warfare, electro-magnetic pulse weapons, anti-satellite capabilities and ballistic missiles equipped with weapons of mass destruction to inflict incalculable harm on this nation and its economy. They need not match us division for division or carrier for carrier to pose a grave threat.

It is sometimes said that this danger is exaggerated because using such techniques against the United States would be tantamount to national suicide. Pearl Harbor offers an objective lesson, however, about the folly of such mirror-imaging: A relatively weak nation may

embark on a course that would appear to be suicidal if it misperceives the true costs of its actions because it has underestimated American power and the will to use it. More than 2,000 people lost their lives Dec. 7, 1941, because of such a miscalculation.

**Economic Warfare.** Western democracies, including the United States, wrongly believed that accommodating potential adversaries – notably, by engaging in extensive commerce with them – would enable a second global conflict to be avoided. In part due to this unfounded expectation, Nazi Germany was Great Britain's largest trading partner on the eve of World War II. And in the months leading up to Pearl Harbor, the United States sold Japan tons of scrap metal that were subsequently rained down on Hawaii's ports, ships and airfields – among many other places – in the form of Japanese artillery shells and bombs.

Today, there is strong reason to believe that unfair trade with the United States from which Communist China is benefiting – an annual trade surplus of about \$50 billion a year – is not only far less beneficial to our national economy than is often suggested; it is enabling a Chinese military buildup likely to be our most serious national-security threat of the future.

Parochially minded American companies also are pushing for expanded economic relations with the likes of Iraq, Iran, Libya, Syria, Sudan and North Korea. These companies tend to focus exclusively on short-term profits and generally seem unconcerned about the larger implications for the nation if the regimes of such rogue states are enriched, legitimated and emboldened. History suggests that, far from encouraging democratic reform, the effects of trade conducted on the dictators'



Traffic passes by a McDonald's restaurant in Beijing in May 2000. Trade with Communist China is not only less beneficial to our national economy than is often suggested, but actually enables a Chinese military buildup that translates into a serious national security threat.



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*"A relatively weak nation may embark on a course that would appear to be suicidal if it misperceives the true costs of its actions because it has underestimated American power and the will to use it. More than 2,000 people lost their lives Dec. 7, 1941, because of such a miscalculation."*



The USS Arizona burns following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

terms usually translates into life support for them and their abidingly hostile governments.

**The Trouble With Treaties.** Prior to World War II, the United States and other Western democracies pursued a variety of accords with one or more of the Axis leaders. Arguably, the most delusional and preposterous of these was the Kellogg-Briand treaty, which purported to ban war altogether.

Even in the face of a succession of failed accords, the democracies nurtured the belief that the next deal would somehow be honored more faithfully by the dictators. It was only when the bombs were exploding in Pearl Harbor that the United States finally broke off negotiations with Japanese diplomats duplicitously sent to Washington to parlay about how to avoid conflict between the two nations.

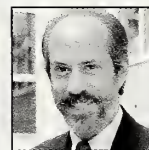
Today, we are told that deals with people like Kim Jong Il of North Korea – by which, for example, he would pledge to suspend his ballistic missile development program – are a more reliable basis for U.S. security than having a missile-defense system capable of shooting down anything launched at us. This requires that we ignore considerable evidence that Kim Jong Il has violated his previous understandings about foregoing covert acquisition of nuclear weapons. We also would have to disregard the fact that ballistic missiles are today North Korea's most lucrative export commodity. Kim Jong Il could always exploit existing cooperative arrangements with Iran, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Sudan or Pakistan to enable his regime to circumvent any agreement he might make by allowing further missile development, testing and production to be conducted overseas.

Certainly, important differences exist between the world the new Bush administration faces today and that which confronted the Roosevelt administration in 1941. In addition, such conditions as those noted above which bear strong similarities across the years are certainly not identical.

Yet the United States ignores at its peril the reality that, under circumstances that are in some notable ways similar to today's, this nation was surprised to find itself at the receiving end of a deadly and premeditated attack that even the Japanese admiral who conceived and executed it thought was likely to prove suicidal.

For these reasons, the deficiencies in our military readiness must be corrected immediately. Actions to redress the shortfalls of today's armed forces, and to provide for tomorrow's, are both warranted and essential. This is especially necessary to defend the American people against missile attack and deny a large and growing number of nations the means to inflict a more devastating Pearl Harbor down the road. History teaches us that this is the most sure means of avoiding wars; there is no time to be

lost in promoting this perception around the world. □



*Frank J. Gaffney Jr. held senior positions in the Reagan administration's Defense Department. He is currently president of the Center for Security Policy in Washington, D.C.*

Article design: Holly K. Soria



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, and Chinese parliament speaker Li Peng meet in the Kremlin in September 2000. America's two most formidable potential adversaries have created a "strategic partnership."



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# Courage in the night at Nam Dong

## *Donlon's unit held tough, fighting off a bloody VC raid.*

By Dan Allsup

**I**t was 2 a.m. on July 6, 1964, and Capt. Roger Donlon uneasily patrolled Nam Dong, a small outpost of freedom in Vietnam, where he commanded the U.S. Army Special Forces Detachment A-726.

"I can't put my finger on it, but something's wrong," Donlon mused silently, wringing a final harsh drag from his cigarette.

It was quiet, maybe too quiet, and he wasn't the only trooper feeling uneasy. "I don't think we'll see the sun come up," one man predicted.

"Get everyone buttoned up tight tonight," the 30-year-old Donlon ordered. "The VC are coming. I can feel it." The 13 Americans and more than 300 South Vietnamese compatriots could only wait.

At 2:26 a.m., dressed in black pajamas and a T-shirt and carrying an AR-15 rifle and a .45-caliber automatic, Donlon opened the mess hall screen door to check the next day's duty roster. Then his world exploded in a cacophony of automatic-weapons fire and mortar explosions. Nam Dong was under attack by the Viet Cong.

Blown through the mess hall door by a mortar explosion, Donlon scrambled to his feet and ordered a team member to radio for an air strike. Ignoring the effects of a severe stomach wound, Donlon wiped out a three-man enemy demolition team attempting to breach the main gate. After crawling to a gun pit and finding most of his men wounded, he covered them with withering return fire as they withdrew. Now bleeding from his shoulder as well, Donlon crawled out of the gun pit, attempting to drag his nearly unconscious team sergeant to safety, only to be blasted back into the mortar pit.

For the next five hours, Donlon – bleeding from multiple wounds – marshaled his forces, treated the wounded and directed Nam Dong's defenses. He blinked when the morning sun cut through the smoky battlefield. Fifty-five South Vietnamese soldiers were dead and more were wounded. Two Americans, Master Sgt. Gabriel Alamo and Sgt. John Houston – as well as Warrant

Officer Kevin Conway of the Australian Army Training Team – also were dead. But Nam Dong had held.

With two Distinguished Service Crosses, presented posthumously to Alamo and Houston, four Silver Stars and five Bronze Stars with the "V" device for valor, Detachment A-726 of the U.S. Army Special Forces remains one of the most highly decorated units of its size in history.

In December 1964, the nine survivors were in the White House's east wing when President Lyndon Johnson presented Donlon the first Medal of Honor of the Vietnam War. Two years later, The American Legion presented him its highest award, the Distinguished Service Medal.

Donlon retired from the Army in 1988 as a full colonel. He now lives with Norma, his wife of 32 years, in Leavenworth, Kan. Active in community and public affairs, Donlon is a board member of People to People International, an education and cultural exchange program, and he's active



Courtesy: Roger Donlon

**Special Forces Capt. Roger Donlon could sense the enemy was near on July 6, 1964.**

with the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

Donlon travels the country to speak to youth and civic groups about patriotism and military service. "I grew up in a family where service was a core value," he says. "My dad served in World War I, and my four brothers served in World War II and Korea.

Our hometown has a rich tradition of service, and its townsfolk have participated in wars since the Revolutionary War. This all had an impact on my longing to serve."

Nam Dong was Donlon's personal contribution.

*Donlon is the author of "Beyond Nam Dong," available by writing R and N Publishers, 2101 Wilson Avenue, Leavenworth, KS, 66048.*

*Dan Allsup is a freelance writer who lives in suburban St. Louis.*

*Article design: Doug Rollison*

## Straight talk from a war hero

Retired Army Col. Roger Donlon pulls no punches when he travels the country speaking on patriotism, faith and duty. Here are some of his recent remarks:

**Military service:** "There is no doubt in my mind that our youth today would benefit from one or two years of national service. One of the biggest drawbacks of the military today is the concept of the all-volunteer force. It's just drawing from too small a segment of America and leaving out too much of our society."

**Vietnam draft dodgers:** "We were fighting the war to stop the spread of communism. We were fighting for our way of life and the people's right to protest. But there were cowards. When we are called to fight for our country, we have an inherent responsibility to serve."

**How combat affected his life:** "I came out changed in many ways. I changed physically because of the scars, but I also have the emotional scars of losing my friends in the war."

**Today's military:** "The military hasn't received the support it needs for some time now. We're doing much more with much less and many of our people feel disenfranchised. There's too much stress being placed on our families and we're stretched too thin. We just can't be all things to all people. It's hurtful to see."



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# UNABASHED VETERANS ADVOCATE

## *New chairman of House Veterans Affairs Committee is no stranger to Legion issues.*

**B**y most political definitions, Christopher H. Smith can reasonably be pegged a moderate – a strong defender of his core beliefs, but a political centrist nevertheless. In his 11 terms as a Congressman representing New Jersey's 4th District, Smith has been a bur under the saddle of Democrat and Republican colleagues alike. But all agree he is a passionate advocate for those issues he holds dear.

Smith is a steadfast anti-abortion activist. The debate first drew him to

politics and has always been atop his domestic legislative agenda. He has even taken his anti-abortion crusade international. As a member of the Foreign Relations Committee (now called International Relations), Smith successfully blocked U.S. funding for the United Nations Population Fund and the International Planned Parenthood Foundation.

Yet it's been his untiring devotion to blue-collar workers and organized labor that gives the Republican crossover appeal with Democrats on

the Hill and at home. In the early years of the Clinton administration, Smith voted with the President about 45 percent of the time. He has backed the Family Medical Leave Act, a waiting period for the purchase of handguns and a ban on assault weapons – all issues not typically embraced by Republicans.

Long a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Smith is its chairman for the 107th Congress. If his past record on veterans' causes is any indication, Smith is expected to be an important voice on behalf of veterans.

To get a better understanding of Smith's agenda at the Veterans Affairs Committee, *The American Legion Magazine* Assistant Editor James V. Carroll traveled to Washington, D.C., to find out what's on the chairman's mind.

### **THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE:**

**Congress faces a lack of credibility with many veterans. How can confidence be restored?**

**REP. CHRIS SMITH:** I'm an unabashed advocate for veterans. There has never been another group of Americans anywhere, at any time, as deserving as our veterans. We need to demonstrate in absolute terms, in the clearest way possible, that I, the Veterans Affairs Committee, Congress and certainly George W. Bush want to strengthen and expand veterans' health care and other benefits. We need more outpatient clinics, not fewer. We need more nursing homes. We need to embark on significant infrastructure improvements. We need to show that our support for veterans is here to stay.

**Q:** One area of particular distrust deals with the difficulty of obtaining recognition for service-related illnesses. What can be done about that?

**A:** Where science is suggestive but not determinative, that's where reasonable men and women should make judgments in favor of the veteran. That's particularly so when you have a large set or subset of veterans who have



Photo Courtesy: Rep. Chris Smith



been affected. Bottom line: err on the side of the veteran.

**Q:** Even when service-connected illness is established, delays in treatment often follow. What can be done about that?

**A:** We have a very aggressive oversight committee looking at a number of these issues facing veterans in their daily interaction with VA. Why are there so many delays in getting medical attention or benefits decisions? Why are there so few adjudicators? Why does it take two years for a veteran to get appeals resolved? We have to address these problems and deliver solutions. We must develop accountability.

**Q:** How will the committee develop its priorities regarding veterans?

**A:** In addition to reviewing VA programs, we will seek the views of veterans service organizations such as The American Legion, military associations and other interest groups and private organizations. In a series of joint hearings with the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, these groups will present to the committee respective national resolutions and agendas for veterans.

**Q:** What specifically can the Veterans Affairs Committee do to improve the plight of the veteran in his or her daily dealings with VA?

**A:** We can help the VA set targets. We can do oversight and work to get additional resources for VA. If there's a lack of personnel, we need to know. We have to get a solid handle on the shortfalls. That's why Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony J. Principi is taking an A-to-Z review of his agency to find out where the gaps might be. And those gaps are going to jump off the page, I'm sure. That doesn't mean problems get resolved immediately, but it does mean problems have the potential to get resolved quickly.

**Q:** How do you compete with the conflicting demands for finite resources?

**A:** Veterans do face competing interests. However, veterans issues will rise to the top if we make a case based on need. If we can't win on need, we can't win. The budget will ultimately dictate what resources will be available. But we are trying to talk to as many people as we can before the numbers start to

***"There has never been another group of Americans anywhere, at any time, as deserving as our veterans."***

***— Christopher H. Smith, R-N.J.***



**Rep. Chris Smith favors concurrent receipt, better VA funding and the flag amendment.**

solidify. I realize veterans have high expectations, and we'll try to get as much for them as humanly possible. We may not get everything at once. More likely progress will be made incrementally. Piece by piece, you get closer to your goal.

**Q:** What is the possibility of concurrent-receipt legislation passing in the 107th Congress?

**A:** I'm in favor of concurrent receipt. Military veterans are the only class of federal employees who lose earned retirement pay equal to the amount of disability benefits. It's not fair. We are going to try to get something done, but I can't guarantee there will be significant progress right now.

**Q:** Competing interests aside, why is it sometimes difficult to pass veterans legislation?

**A:** When we are not in all-out war, veterans are quickly forgotten. That's unfortunate, because I think peacetime veterans are extremely important. They know how to wage war and are a deterrent to fighting more wars. Memorial Day and Veterans Day observances, despite major efforts, are less attended than in the past. I don't know how you can enforce remembrance, but you certainly can criticize forgetfulness. Our veterans have sacrificed too much, too

often for our nation to forget them. If you want to pass important, landmark legislation, you have to play a full-court press. I've never seen anything that just happened.

**Q:** You are an advocate of the flag-protection amendment. How likely is it that the 107th Congress will pass it?

**A:** I have co-sponsored legislation year in, year out and am totally in sync with it. The flag is the ultimate symbol of our country. When the Iranians or anyone else want to make a statement of utter contempt and hatred for America, what is it they burn? The flag! We should be lifting up the flag in such a way that we are saying, "This is our national symbol."

**Q:** Why does the flag-protection amendment continue to fall short of a two-thirds majority in the Senate?

**A:** Certainly there are a number of reasons, but one most frequently articulated is the argument that we are tampering with the Constitution, taking something away. I don't see it. It's a false fear. What are we taking away? What comma, semicolon, word, phrase or anything are we taking away from the U.S. Constitution when we add something to it? We are only making it stronger. This should be a slam-dunk with near unanimity. We have to revive respect, not only for veterans, but also for what this country stands for. We are the envy of the world. When we take the flag and throw it on the ground or desecrate it by burning it — well, shame on us.

**Q:** What do you hope to accomplish during the first half of the 107th Congress?

**A:** I hope we will have made significant progress on a number of fronts — Medicare subvention, concurrent receipt, VERA (Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation), VA and DoD Health Resources Sharing, CHAMPVA, to name a few. I realize that at the end of the day there will be some people upset. I've learned you never can meet all the expectations. But I hope everyone will say I did everything humanly possible, touched every single base and worked faithfully for the issues important to veterans. I can't promise an outcome, but I will be faithful in all efforts to forward veterans issues. □

*Article design: Doug Rollison*





William Collins, left, formerly a homeless veteran and resident of the Dodge Center, celebrates his recent college graduation with Robert Lefter, executive director of the Dodge Development Center in Rutland, Vt. The Dodge Center is Vermont's only transitional-housing facility for homeless veterans.

## Vermont Post helps homeless

Across the nation, The American Legion is successfully helping formerly homeless veterans get back on their feet.

A shelter in Rutland, Vt., is one such success story. At the Dodge Center, Vermont's only transitional-housing facility for homeless veterans, new residents receive help with personal, legal and financial problems – plus get a roof over their heads – provided they stay clean and sober. New residents also receive a free one-year membership at Rutland's American Legion Post 31.

One of the program's most successful former clients, Robert Lefter, now runs the program. Recently named executive director of the Dodge Center, Lefter is a Vietnam War veteran who spent five years homeless before going through the Legion-supported program. "Getting connected with other veterans gives a closeness I can't describe," he said. "The whole deal is veterans helping veterans."

The center's single biggest non-government supporter is the Sons of The American Legion Detachment in Vermont, which raises more than \$5,000 a year for the program. Post 31 also makes a monthly contribution, and The American Legion Auxiliary provides support with food drives, blankets, clothes and other items.

## Legion offers plan for VA budget

A resolution passed March 21 by the House Budget Committee would be good for veterans, American Legion National Commander Ray G. Smith said.

The measure would increase the Department of Veterans Affairs budget by \$5.6 billion in fiscal 2002. The resolution authorizes a \$1.7 billion increase in discretionary spending, which includes health care and the VA claims process. The measure also takes into account two bills that the Veterans' Affairs Committee passed March 21. **HR 811**, The Veterans Hospital Emergency Repair Act, would authorize \$250 million in fiscal 2002 and \$300 million in fiscal 2003 for VA construction and repair projects. The key provisions of **HR 801**, the Veterans' Opportunities Act of 2001, would:

- Expand the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program to cover spouses up to a maximum of \$100,000 and children to \$10,000;

- Include certain private technology entities in the definition of educational institutions;

- Permit veterans to use Montgomery GI Bill educational benefits for a certificate program offered by an institution by way of independent study;

- Authorize the VA to maintain transition assistance offices overseas;

- Increase VA outreach efforts to eligible veterans and dependents;

- Increase the burial and funeral benefit from \$1,500 to \$2,000 for service-connected veterans and from \$300 to \$500 to nonservice-connected veterans, and the

burial plot allowance from \$150 to \$300;

- Increase the automobile and adaptive equipment grant for severely disabled veterans from \$8,000 to \$9,000, the adapted housing grant from \$43,000 to \$48,000, and increase the amount for future necessary adaptations to the home from \$8,250 to \$9,250.

"More than a thousand American Legion representatives personally lobbied their members of Congress for a strong VA budget; that's what this resolution represents," Smith said. "I commend the House Veterans Affairs Committee and the House Budget Committee for doing everything in their power to help those who sacrificed for freedom. This level of VA funding will go a long way toward improving all veterans' benefits. It will provide the funds to expedite the VA claims process so that, someday, it will no longer take months or years for a disability claim to be adjudicated.

"However, Congress can make further improvement by adding a provision of The American Legion's GI Bill of Health, one that would allow veterans to use their Medicare coverage to receive treatment in the VA. Many more veterans would use the system if they could use their Medicare benefits for any type of care they require, just as they can in the private sector. Our proposal would give more veterans the access to quality health care they earned by their military service and allow VA to become a direct TRICARE contractor to enhance health care for veterans who are military retirees."

## Legion honorees recognized

Almost since the founding of The American Legion in 1919, Posts have recognized their outstanding members for exceptional service or accomplishments by awarding Life Memberships. A Post-sponsored Life Membership is the highest honor a Post can bestow on its members.

Although Departments may have different rules pertaining to the granting of this type of membership, the only national requirement is that the Post assumes the responsibility of paying the annual dues for the remainder of the member's life.

Posts must be careful not to overlook the annual dues payments for its Life

members, as this will result in lapsed memberships, says Deputy Director of Internal Affairs Jeffry Wonder.

In recognition of their meritorious service, *The American Legion Magazine* will once again publish the names of those Legionnaires awarded Post-sponsored Life Memberships. A new list of members' names will be published monthly in "Comrades."

For more information or to nominate someone for Life Membership, write to The American Legion, Membership Division, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or call (317) 630-1205.



# Article rekindles lost friendship

Some pranks are too good to forget, even after 56 years. Just ask Martin Pelland of Tucson, Ariz., and William Mrazek of Naperville, Ill.

Pelland submitted a letter to *The American Legion Magazine* describing a buddy's prank during basic training at Sheppard Air Force Base, Wichita Falls, Texas, in 1945. The letter appeared in the magazine's September 1999 issue.

In the letter Pelland described how recruits, deprived for the first time of the privacy and comforts of home, slept in tents with dirt floors and lined up to share toilet facilities.

One day, Pelland, leaving the barracks after showering, was crossing the sandy compound leading to his tent when buddy William Mrazek suddenly divested him of the towel he had wrapped around his waist. Pelland was left standing stark naked.

Just then, a lorry of open-back trucks loaded with female nurses drove by. Pelland heard laughter and screams as the women caught sight of him. Feeling vulnerable, Pelland dropped to the ground, face down, and stayed in the sand until the convoy passed.

After their military service, the two men lost contact. — that is, until Pelland's article appeared in the magazine. Mrazek read the article and contacted his old buddy. Several months



Courtesy William Mrazek

**Buddies William Mrazek, left, and Martin Pelland met during basic training at Sheppard Air Force Base, Wichita Falls, Texas, in 1945. This photo was taken after the men had completed basic training.**

later, the friends were reunited. The men plan to continue their reunions in 2001 and beyond, thanks to a prank that neither man will ever forget.

# Deceased vet receives medal

A deceased World War I veteran will be awarded a Purple Heart, thanks in part to the work of American Legion National Security Deputy Director Mike Duggan.

Duggan was contacted by Judy Harvey, the granddaughter-in-law of Army Pvt. Charles H. Harvey. The World War I veteran, who has several great-grandchildren serving in the U.S. military, was originally approved for a Purple Heart by then-Army Chief of Staff Douglas MacArthur, but the medal was never awarded.

Duggan, a Vietnam War Army veteran and member of the Legion's

Washington, D.C., staff, searched through the National Archives in College Park, Md., in October. He found proof that Harvey wore the "wound chevron" on the left wrist of his uniform jacket.

Duggan took the case to the Military Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, which could not authorize the medal. In December, he appealed in writing to the U.S. Total Army office in Washington. The office approved the medal and sent it to him.

Duggan will make arrangements for a suitable presentation of the Purple Heart.

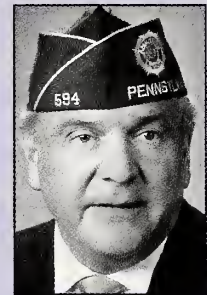


## PNC DiFrancesco honored for service

Dauphin County commissioners in Pennsylvania recently honored Past National Commander Dominic D. DiFrancesco for years of service to the United States and military veterans by naming the county veterans building the "Dominic D. DiFrancesco Veterans Memorial Office Building."

A plaque bearing DiFrancesco's name and likeness is permanently mounted at the building's entrance.

"As a Korean War veteran and the Past National Commander of The American Legion,



The American Legion

**DiFrancesco** has spent his entire adult life working to improve the lives of veterans," Commissioner Lowman Henry said. "He served at the local, state and federal levels of veterans organizations and has served as a community role model, proving that one man can make a difference."

DiFrancesco was elected National Commander in 1991. He also has served as the Department of Pennsylvania's National Executive Committeeman and Alternate National Executive Committeeman.

DiFrancesco's other national positions have included chairman of the Membership & Post Activities Committee and of the Legislative Commission, as well as membership on the Public Relations Commission, National Security Council and Resolutions Subcommittee.

He also was part of a special American Legion delegation sent to Saudi Arabia in October 1990 to gain firsthand knowledge of the preparations, needs and concerns of American troops prior to Operation Desert Storm.





Legionnaire Jeffrey N. Williams took an American Legion flag with him on the space shuttle Atlantis to the International Space Station. Williams is a member of Wacek-Slaterry Post 303, Winter, Wis.

## Legionnaire takes Post to new heights

When U.S. Army Lt. Col. Jeffrey N. Williams, a Legionnaire from Wacek-Slaterry Post 303, Winter, Wis., took a flight aboard the space shuttle Atlantis to NASA's International Space Station, he had an American Legion flag with him.

As part of the STS-101 Mission, Atlantis spent 11 days in space. Williams spent more than six hours outside the space station completing planned assembly and maintenance tasks.

After the mission was completed, Williams' return to Winter was marked by a celebration at a local school gymnasium. A Legion Honor Guard escorted Williams and his family to the packed gym where the crowd greeted them with a standing ovation.

Williams narrated a computerized photo presentation of his experiences on the shuttle and his walk in space. He later presented to Post 303 and the Legion's 12th District in Wisconsin a collage of The American Legion flag, an Atlantis crew shoulder patch, and photos of the crew inside the shuttle and a view from space.



In a new public-service announcement produced by The American Legion, National Commander Ray Smith, left, talks with Duke University men's basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski about the Legion's involvement in the Children's Miracle Network.

## Commander, Coach K host PSAs

National Commander Ray Smith has teamed up with Duke University men's basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski in a new public-service announcement about The American Legion's involvement with the Children's Miracle Network.

In the 60-second spot, Krzyzewski, a member of Post 1981, Department of North Carolina, bounces a ball back and forth with Smith while the two discuss The American Legion's role in CMN fund raising.

Smith and Krzyzewski, a CMN spokesman and chairman of the Duke Children's Hospital Telethon, praise the time and talents the 4 million members of

the Legion family invest in the CMN.

Krzyzewski also appears in two other PSAs by himself, praising the Legion family for its fund-raising efforts and encouraging active-duty military personnel to join the Legion and explore its many volunteer opportunities.

All three videotaped PSAs, 30 and 60 seconds long respectively, have been distributed to 86 cable television markets surrounding military installations. Copies also have been sent to every Department. Legionnaires wanting to provide the tapes to local cable stations can do so by contacting the Legion's Public Relations Division at (317) 630-1253.

## Big Twelve winners announced

Two winners were recently announced for the Big Twelve Competition: Vermont from Category V and Delaware from Category VI. Each Department will receive a computer or related equipment valued at \$2,000.

The "Big Twelve Competition" rewards those Departments that meet or exceed target "pledges" made earlier at the Commanders and Adjutants Conference. Each Department must achieve at least 90 percent of the Department's membership

goal and may pledge to reach goals higher than 90 percent. Departments reaching or exceeding the higher-pledged goals score higher in the competition than Departments that pledge a lower percentage.

According to William Sloan, assistant director of the Legion's Internal Affairs and Membership Division, "Delaware and Vermont are just two great examples of Department leadership in action, which they demonstrated by exceeding tough, self-imposed membership goals."



# New incentive for Ray's Aces

In September, National Commander Ray Smith initiated "Ray's Aces" to boost declining Legion membership. To become a "Ray's Ace," Legionnaires must recruit five new members.

Early 2001 recruitment figures totaled 3,530, leaving the Legion 6,470 short of achieving its goal of 10,000 new members through Smith's program.

Smith recently announced a new incentive to spur membership efforts. Department Commanders and Membership chairmen who have the highest percent of gain, minus direct solicitation members, from Feb. 1 through May 9 will be presented three special awards at the National Convention Aug. 24-30 in San Antonio. The first-place award will be

an engraved gold diamond-studded ring. The second-place award will be an engraved silver diamond-studded ring. The third-place award will be a bronze engraved plaque.

In addition, winners and their National Executive Committeemen and Department Adjutants will be Smith's guests at a special reception during the National Convention. Also invited will be the leadership of those Departments that obtain 100 percent or more of their 2001 membership goal by May 9.

Smith said the incentives have one goal in mind: to reverse the membership slide so that the Legion can continue to serve veterans, their families and communities everywhere.



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# Ballooning for POWs



*Freedom  
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raises  
awareness  
of the  
plight of  
POWs, MIAs*

**By Layne Cameron  
Photos by Tom Strattman**

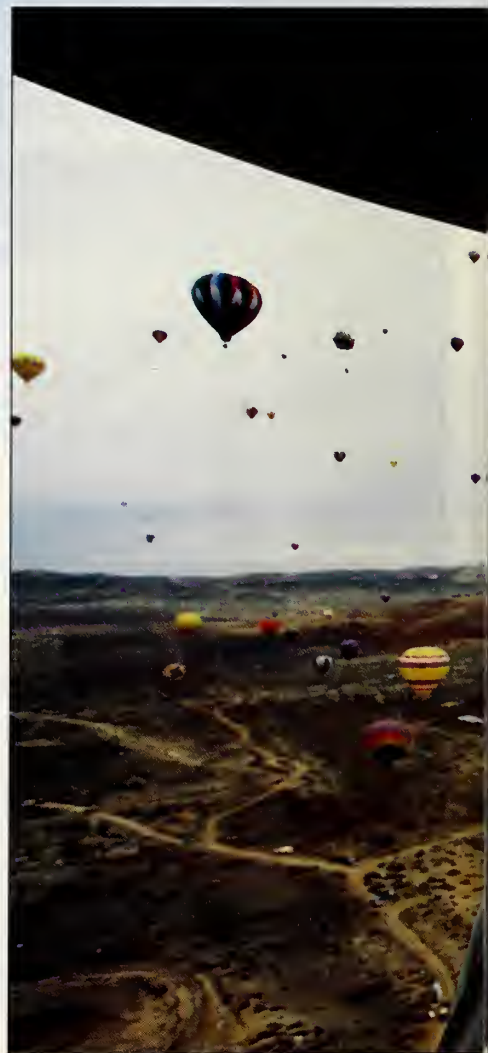
**I**N THE PREDAWN darkness at New Mexico's Red Rock State Park, few visitors can envision anything blossoming from the lifeless silt in the morning's biting cold. Temperatures hover in the teens, and nobody, with the exception of a handful of enthusiastic volunteers, seems to be awake yet. The hosts of the Red Rock Balloon Rally in Gallup, N.M., however, promise that the canyons will soon bloom with color and their 20th an-

niversary event will be worth enduring the frosty stillness.

Soon, a caravan of trucks and trailers streaming from Gallup toward the park emerge from the darkness, mimicking the closing scene from the movie "Field of Dreams." The convoy is a mix of pilots, crew and spectators who have traveled across the United States



The best place to find solace from the dawn's frigid temperatures is near the balloons as participants fire up their burners prior to launch.





to fly in or watch the colorful rally. One can almost hear the canyons whisper, "Fly them, and they will come."

As promised, the quiet canyon becomes a flurry of activity and color as balloon crews begin the arduous task of preparing for flight. Trails leading toward the mesa tops fill with knowing spectators scurrying to prime vantage points to welcome Old Sol and witness the transformation.

The sun's rays beam upon the canyon's crimson walls and the flowering fields below. Pilot Luke Cesnik of Albuquerque Legion Post 49 is unfazed by the cold. "In Minnesota, we're used to flying on a frozen lake," Cesnik, 48, chuckles. What's important to him, he says, is the calm wind and piercing blue sky – a perfect morning for ballooning.

Cesnik, a Vietnam War veteran and frequent balloonist, resides in St. Cloud, Minn. He holds his Legion membership in the State of Enchant-

ment but jets around the world promoting his organization, Freedom Flight Inc. After a year of recruiting volunteers and sponsors, Freedom Flight was launched – quite literally – in 1989 to raise awareness for the plight of POWs, MIAs and their families. The maiden voyage of *Freedom Flight I* affirmed founders Jim Tuorila and Bill Nohner's belief that a hot-air balloon was the best medium for the organization's message: "The American people are raising their voices to demand that American servicemen be brought home. Some of us are raising more than our voices."

Judging by the throng of visitors gathered around Cesnik and his crew, it's obvious the organization is achieving its mission. Cesnik's wife, Pam, and fellow Legionnaires Jerry Becker and Bob Hoversten act as the skeleton crew. Spectators milling about the trailer soon learn just how accessible the sport is as they're recruited to help with

the launch. (When space is available, the truly lucky ones are invited to fly.)

*Freedom Flight III's* black envelope, or bag, with its teary-eyed eagle ensnared in barbed wire, stands out from the other balloons. The makeshift crew realizes they're a part of something more than just someone's hobby. And before Cesnik fires the dual, 19-million BTU burners, he rewards everyone with a collector's pin, a small card (complete with the balloon's statistics) and an abbreviated POW/MIA lesson: "We're flying in *Freedom*, because they lost theirs."

Novice crewmember and Vietnam War and Desert Storm veteran Edison Tsosie wins the lift-off lotto and is asked if he'd like to fly today. His beaming smile answers for him, and he clamors aboard. (His grin doesn't subside throughout the entire 90-minute flight.)

With a few long blasts from the burners, the balloon takes flight with cheers from the crowd. Rising up, *Freedom* joins a formidable armada of hot-air crafts – more than 100 balloons will take to the skies this morning. The variety is as eclectic as it is colorful. Traditionally shaped balloons are



Above: Luke Cesnik displays a medicine bundle gifted to him by a Navajo Indian medicine man, who is also a Vietnam War veteran. Cesnik carries the "good luck" bundle with him on every flight.

Left: Russ Grantham, a Vietnam War veteran, enjoys a panoramic view of Red Rock Canyon. Grantham has been ballooning since 1992.





Left: The awesome sight of the hot-air balloons stops traffic along the busy highways beneath.

Below: Balloons light up the night like oversized luminaries during the "Glow in the Rocks" event.

the most prevalent and range in hue from *Freedom's* flat black to others sporting radiant rainbow schemes. Others, however, seem to have been peeled from the pages of children's books. Humpty Dumpty, giant pigs, a globe, flying carriages and a soda can hang silently in the sky. One of the most elaborate balloons is *Arky* – a replica of Noah's ark, complete with 28 animals peeping over the side.

Out of the canyon's shadows, temperatures in the 40s feel like a veritable heat wave. And since the balloon moves with the breeze, no wind chill taints the warmth. "You couldn't ask for a better day to fly," beams Cesnik.

Cesnik's father, a fixed-winger flyer, sparked his son's love of flight by allowing the 10-year-old to accompany him in his plane. Five years later, Cesnik earned his own flying license. Nine years ago, yearning to broaden his flying expertise, he became a balloon pilot. His extensive experience, honed by logging 40 flights a year, affords him a wealth of maneuvers and finesse that make the flight pure bliss for him and his three passengers. From 1,000 feet up, the imprisoned eagle's gaze extends beyond Gallup to the west and Mount Taylor, some 60 miles to the east. The view, which seems to extend to the edge of the earth, is extraordinary. But taking a flight path over lower elevations proves to be even more exhilarating.

A controlled descent drops the wicker gondola within arm's reach of the sandstone cliffs, close enough to snatch a red rock for a souvenir. Dropping further, hovering mere inches



above the sage, Cesnik opens one of the dual rotators. The propulsion produces a slow spin and allows the balloon to playfully roll against the smooth walls.

**Laughter and Hot-air.** Hearing the laughter and seeing the frolicsome maneuvers, Legionnaire Terry Drake of Post 407, High Rolls, N.M., joins the fun. Drake, a Vietnam War veteran helicopter pilot, wouldn't have dared fly his *Cobra* this close to a gorge – or a balloon, for that matter. But being able to drop in on his friends from out of the blue is what makes his hot-air hobby so enjoyable.

"The flying is fun," says Drake. "But it's the companionship that makes it worthwhile." The 57-year-old loves the camaraderie so much that he and his wife occasionally travel to rallies without their balloon. "We'll go

and just crew for our friends."

His delight is apparent as he gives Cesnik a kiss. Actually, their balloons share the smooch – a maneuver in which the pilots allow their envelopes to brush against each other. For the remainder of the flight, the two friends play hide-and-seek, flying in and out of the canyons on delicate whispers of wind. Just as Drake thought he had lost *Freedom*, the watchful eagle's eyes rise from the adjacent ravine as if to say, "You're it."

Just before touching down, Cesnik casts a somber note over the playful mood. Acknowledging the higher purpose of his flight, he dedicates the final pass through the canyon to every POW/MIA not yet accounted for. After a moment of silence, he offers up a slight variation of the balloonist's prayer to conclude the ceremony:

"The winds have welcomed us with softness. The sun has blessed us with its warm hands. We flew so high and so well in *Freedom* that God has joined us in our laughter, and he has set us gently back again into the loving arms of Mother Earth." □

To find out about *Freedom Flight's* schedule of events or to obtain membership information, write to *Freedom Flight Inc.*, P.O. Box 1052, St. Cloud, MN 56302-1052, or visit the Web site at [www.freedomflight.org](http://www.freedomflight.org).



Layne Cameron is a free-lance writer living outside Indianapolis.

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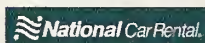
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# CONVENTION TRAVEL GUIDE

## *Air, lodging, car discounts welcome Legionnaires to San Antonio.*

**S**an Antonio's zesty mix of flavors – from historic missions to modern skyscrapers and a unique cuisine known as "Tex-Mex" – makes America's eighth-largest city a national hotspot for visitors.

Members of The American Legion family will get a taste of San Antonio's diversity Aug. 24-30 during the National Conventions. Special prices for airplane tickets, rental cars, hotels and even an RV campground are now offered to members of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion to make travel costs more affordable.

Eighteen hotels will house members of The American Legion's 55 Departments. Local RV accommodations are also available. Members planning to attend the National Convention should contact their Department Adjutants to make hotel reservations. More information is available on The American Legion's Web site at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

General sessions of the National Convention will be conducted at **The Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center**.

Here is a list of who's staying where, followed by American Legion partners providing transportation discounts:

### **Who's Staying Where**

- **Arkansas, Indiana, South Dakota and Texas** at Adam's Mark San Antonio Riverwalk.
- **New York and Rhode Island** at Camberley Gunter Hotel
- **Kansas and Nebraska** at St. Anthony Hotel, Wyndham Heritage
- **Illinois and New Jersey** at Four Points Sheraton Riverwalk
- **Mississippi, New Mexico and Washington** at Hampton Inn Riverwalk
- **Iowa, Maryland, Nevada, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Utah, American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters and 8 et 40** at Hilton Palacio del Rio
- **Colorado and Tennessee** at Holiday Inn Downtown/Market Square Hotel
- **Kentucky and Ohio** at Holiday Inn Riverwalk



The Riverwalk is one of San Antonio's top attractions.

- **Connecticut and Wyoming** at Homewood Suites Riverwalk
- **Alaska, District of Columbia, France, Hawaii, Mexico, North Carolina, Philippines, Puerto Rico, The American Legion National Headquarters, Sons of The American Legion and 20 & 4** at Hyatt Regency Riverwalk
- **Massachusetts** at LaQuinta Inn
- **California** at Radisson Hotel Market Square
- **Minnesota** at Ramada Emily Morgan Hotel
- **Pennsylvania** at Residence Inn by Marriott Alamo Plaza Hotel
- **Missouri and Oregon** at Riverwalk Plaza Hotel
- **Michigan and Oklahoma** at Amerisuites Riverwalk
- **Arizona, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Maine, Virginia and West Virginia** at The Menger Hotel
- **Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Montana, North Dakota, Vermont and Wisconsin** at Westin Riverwalk San Antonio

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### **Flying**

To receive a 10-percent discount on **Southwest Airlines** fares to and from the 2001 National Convention, call (800) 433-5368 and refer to **code No. D5513**. Travel dates are Aug. 21 to Sept. 3.

Discount fares ranging from 5 percent to 15 percent are offered on **United Airlines** flights, including United Shuttle and United Express. Price reductions are greater for earlier ticket purchases. Information on United flights and ticket prices can be obtained by calling (800) 521-4041 and referring to Meeting Plus ID code **No. 551SQ**. The offer is good for the travel period Aug. 19 to Sept. 4.

**Northwest Airlines** also offers Legionnaires 5 percent to 15 percent off the National Convention travel price – depending on the type of fare and ticket purchase date. Northwest's window of travel time is Aug. 21 to Sept. 2. Assistance is provided at (800) 328-1111 Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. (CST). The American Legion Worldfile Number is **NMSE7**.

### **Driving**

Group rates for rental cars during the National Convention are available from **Hertz, Avis and National Car Rental**.

Reservations may be placed through the Hertz Meeting Sales Desk at (800) 654-2240. When booking reservations for Hertz cars with the toll-free number, Legionnaires should use Meeting **No. 022M0323**.

Avis offers discount rental car rates to Legionnaires in San Antonio Aug. 17 to Sept. 6. The toll-free number is (800) 331-1600. The American Legion's Avis Discount Number is **G343699**, which must be used to receive the discount.

The reservation contact number for National Car Rental is (800) 227-7368. The ID number for The American Legion National Convention is **6800711**.



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## Education boondoggle

Under President Bush, the Department of Education will receive the biggest percentage budget increase of any department in the federal government. But the President's new Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, has been warned by Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., that fiscal responsibility must be restored at the agency because billions of education dollars have literally been wasted or lost.

Hoekstra, chairman of the new House Select Education Subcommittee, pointed to a U.S. Office of Special Counsel investigation that substantiated a whistleblower's allegations that "violations of law, gross mismanagement, a gross waste of funds and an abuse of authority" had occurred in the office of the chief financial officer at the department.

The waste included duplicate payments to grantees and contractors totaling more than \$150 million and \$177 million in education grants to ineligible students.

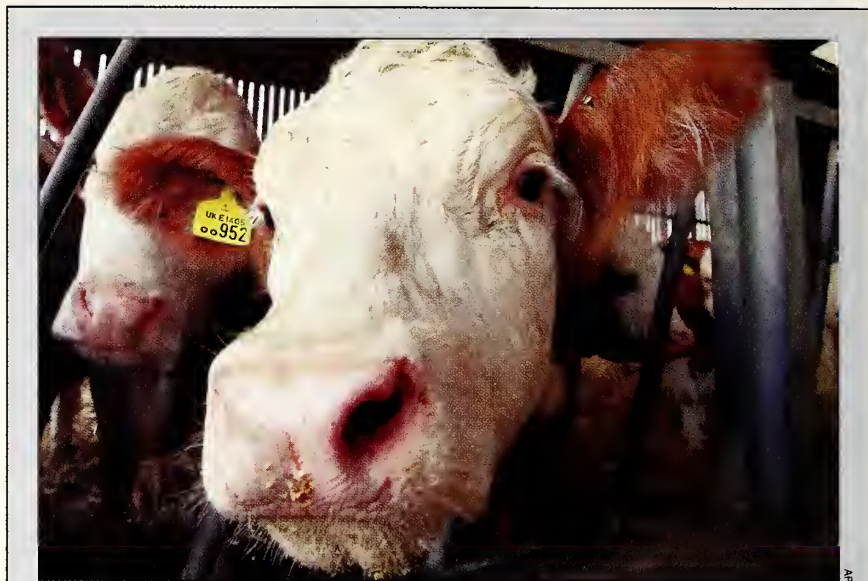
In addition to financial mismanagement, cases of fraud included the theft of \$300,000 worth of department equipment, \$600,000 in false overtime pay, and the diversion of \$1.9 million in agency funds to the CFO's personal bank account to buy a house and two expensive cars.

## Friend or foe?

The discovery of a Russian mole in the FBI has raised concern on Capitol Hill about the bureau's ongoing cooperation with the Russians. In the name of fighting international crime, FBI Director Louis Freeh established close relations with Russian police agencies, even venturing to Moscow in 1997 to give a speech, referring to both sides as "comrades." Freeh advocated a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty between the United States and Russia so that cooperation could increase.

Under Freeh, the FBI has opened numerous offices abroad. As of 1997, the FBI had 82 agents and 61 support employees in 30 nations around the world, including a legal attaché office in Moscow. Russians have even graduated from the FBI's National Academy.

However, at the end of the news conference in which he discussed the arrest of senior FBI agent Robert Hannsen on spy charges, Freeh reiterated that the FBI would continue to "work very closely with the [Russian] ministry of interior" on criminal matters and the Russian internal



After an epidemic of mad cow disease struck England in recent years, the British government began requiring cattle to be tagged to insure that cattle shipments can be tracked. Mad cow disease still poses a threat to Americans, including 4.5 million U.S. military personnel and their families.

## Mad cow disease threatens military and families

Are members of the military and their families at special risk of contracting the fatal mad cow disease? *USA Today*, which recently reported that the United States hasn't done enough to ward off the threat, says 4.5 million U.S. military personnel and their dependents might have consumed beef supplied by the United Kingdom during the peak of its mad cow epidemic.

But the risk is even more widespread. "All of you are very com-

fortable with your food supply," said Thomas Kalil of the Department of Agriculture. "Don't be so comfortable."

Even though cattle are supposed to be banned from mad cow-infected nations, Kalil said that live cattle are now coming into the United States from Mexico, which brings them in from Argentina, where cases of contaminated beef and mad cow disease have already been discovered.

—C.K.

security agency on counterterrorism. Those relationships "are extremely important to both countries" and "will not be affected by this case," he said.

## Targeting the godfather

In a joint statement with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, President Bush called on Libya's dictator Moammar Gadhafi to comply with U.N. resolutions regarding the Pan Am 103 terrorism case before sanctions on Libya would be lifted. Those resolutions require accepting responsibility and compensating the families of the victims.

But some American family members, including Susan Cohen, who lost her only child in the blast, want the United States

to go further. She said Gadhafi himself should be indicted for the crime by the U.S. Department of Justice.

After the Scottish court hearing the case convicted a Libyan intelligence officer, the *London Sunday Times* disclosed that Gadhafi's brother-in-law, Abdullah al-Senussi, then head of Libyan intelligence, planned the bombing and that Gadhafi sanctioned it. The paper said British spies in Libya confirm their role.

However, opposition to a tougher policy is coming from the American Oasis group of oil producers who want to get back into Libya to make money. They are Amerada Hess, Conoco, Marathon Oil Company and Occidental Petroleum Corporation.

—Cliff Kincaid



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## Veterans face GED retake deadline

Time is running out for veterans who have taken the GED High School Equivalency Exams but failed to score high enough on one or more sections for a certificate.

A major overhaul of the GED Battery of exams will change the rules in 2002. The new GED tests will share no compatibility with the old exam, according to Steve Beckman, Department of Defense GED administrator. If a veteran previously failed and wants a GED after January 2002, he or she must take the entire battery, which amounts to 5.5 hours of testing at a cost of \$63 in most states.

Currently, veterans who failed to score high enough for a GED certificate may retake one or more of the five sections and have that score combined with the old scores. If the required score is achieved, the veteran will be awarded a GED High School Equivalency from his or her home state.

## Lejeune Marines continue search

Marine Corps officials are still seeking former Marine families who conceived children while living in Marine Corps base housing at Camp Lejeune from 1968 through 1985. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, a public health agency, is conducting a health survey concerning these children.

To participate, call the National Opinion Research Center at (800) 639-4270. For more information about the survey, call the health agency at (888) 422-8737, extension 5132. The Marine Corps has also established a toll-free number at (877) 261-9782.

## Alabama Memorial honors vets

The Alabama Veterans Memorial opens May 27 in Birmingham to honor Alabama military veterans from all branches of service in all 20th-century wars.

Situated in a 21-acre park, the memorial will recognize more than 11,000 Alabama veterans who lost their lives in the wars of the 20th century, including World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Gulf War.

"The Foundation envisions the memorial as a place of thanksgiving for more than 430,000 veterans currently living in Alabama, a place to educate and a place that celebrates democracy," said Della Fancher, founder and president of the Alabama Veterans Memorial Foundation.

The memorial will feature a Regiment of Columns honoring Alabama's 22 Medal of Honor recipients in addition to the veterans who lost their lives and those who returned home. The 36 columns, 20 feet in height, contain veterans' stories and patriotic sculptures cast in metal by Alabama artists.

In addition to celebrating the opening of the Memorial Park, the grand opening event will establish the Alabama Veterans Memorial Foundation's commitment to education. Scheduled for completion in 2002, the memorial's multimillion-dollar



Located in a 21-acre park in Birmingham, the Alabama Veterans Memorial will recognize more than 11,000 Alabama veterans who lost their lives in the wars of the 20th century.

education center will contain rotating exhibits. Its auditorium will serve as a forum for educators and students to hear guest speakers, says Fancher.

For more information on the Alabama Veterans Memorial, visit its Web site at [www.alabamaveterans.com](http://www.alabamaveterans.com). The Foundation may also be contacted by mail at P.O. Box 36972, Birmingham, Ala., 35236, or by calling (800) 288-7890.

## VA creates Parkinson's centers

VA has taken a step toward improving care and pursuing a cure for Parkinson's disease by creating six new centers that specialize in research, education and clinical care. More than \$30 million has been committed over the next four years to support the new centers.

The centers will be established this year at medical facilities in Houston, Philadelphia, Portland, Ore., Richmond, San Francisco and West Los Angeles. Operating as a national consortium, the new centers will function similarly to VA's Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Centers and mental illness Research, Education Centers.

Each Parkinson's center will conduct research covering basic biomedicine, reha-

bilitation, health services delivery and clinical trials. In addition, each center will participate in a landmark clinical trial to assess the effectiveness of surgical implantation of deep brain stimulators in reducing the symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

Parkinson's disease is slowly progressive and symptoms are characterized by tremors, slowness of movement, stiffness of limbs and gait or balance problems, according to the National Parkinson Foundation. Treatment exists, but no cure has been found. The Foundation estimates that up to 1.5 million Americans have the disease and approximately 50,000 new cases are diagnosed each year.

VA medical centers treat at least 20,000 Parkinson's disease patients each year.



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The **National Reunion Registry** handles all reunion information services for *The American Legion Magazine*. **NRR**, a division of Military Information Enterprises, Inc., is a **private** organization that provides information about reunions, helps veterans locate old buddies and offers other special benefits to veterans and their families.

NRR maintains contact information on thousands of reunions and provides this information free of charge to veterans.

There are several ways to register reunions or check reunion listings with the National Reunion Registry. Please contact the organization directly by writing to **NRR/Reunions, PO Box 17118, Spartanburg, SC 29301**, by faxing **(864) 595-0813** or via e-mail at **information@militaryUSA.com**. Due to the large number of reunions, NRR cannot accept phone requests for reunion information.

To register a reunion, you should include the complete name of the

organization and branch of service with your request. The request should also include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name and telephone number. Please also include a size estimate of the group.

Using the Internet is the 'quickest, most accurate way to access the reunion registry. You may check to see if your buddies are planning a reunion by visiting NRR's Web site at **www.MilitaryUSA.com**. To promote the best accuracy and fastest process when listing your reunion, complete the Reunion Registration Form available on the Web site.

## LOCATING A BUDDY

**MilitaryUSA.com** offers many services for veterans, including tips and techniques for locating current or former military members. *How To Locate Anyone Who Is or Has Been in the Military: Armed Forces Locator Guide* is a practical guide to help people locate service members. The publication can be purchased by contacting MIE Publishing, P.O. Box 17118, Spartanburg, SC 29301 or by faxing (864) 595-0813.

## AIR FORCE

**GEEIA/MDA/EI**, Biloxi, MS, 6/8-10, Hal Smith, (228) 826-1427, harold.smith2@keesler.af.mil; **351st Bomb Grp**, San Diego, 6/13-17, Clint Hammond, (717) 766-1489, bombgroup351st@aol.com; **69th FBS Werewolves**, Seekonk, MA, 6/13-17, Bob Humphreys, (817) 451-8729, wwwwerewolves@hotmail.com; **Wet Hens**, Honolulu, 6/21-24, Verna Morgan, (808) 623-6156, mmorgan@inix.com; **6910th Sec Wing Det 2**, Columbia, MD, 6/22-24, Don Cork, (301) 854-3748, mccork@erols.com

**7th Air Div 3910th Bomb Grp**, 4th AAA SCARWAFs, Charleston, SC, 6/22-26, Bill Parkhurst, (918) 446-6400; **58th Ftr Grp**, Branson, MO, 6/26-7/1, Ellis Stanley, (205) 663-4236; **8th AF Air Dept 2**, England, 6/27-7/2, Ralph Scott, (302) 328-2137, scottrose@juno.com; **485th Tact Missile Wing**, San Antonio, 6/29-7/1, Mavis Baldwin, (830) 981-8682, msbrb@aol.com

## ARMY

**377th Cbt Spt Hosp**, Chattanooga, TN, June, Janet Spangler, (423) 842-3948, wannagosouth@aol.com; **104th Army Div Atlantic Timberwolf**, Pigeon Forge, TN, 6/3-8, Herbert Dahliman, (410) 224-3411; **30th Inf Div Assn**, Cape May, NJ, 6/4-7, Frank Towers, (352) 485-1173, towersfw@aol.com; **26th Inf Div Yankee**, Hyannis, MA, 6/5-7, Robert Raney, (978) 531-2257; **128th AAA Gun Bn**, Atlanta, 6/5-9, Chester Brett, (760) 342-2624; **7788th Med Dept France**, Dover, OH, 6/6-8, Gene Argento, (330) 343-0065, ginogin022@cs.com

**24th Inf Div Assn**, Charleston, WV, 6/6-9, Harry Wittman Jr., (304) 788-0465; **807th Tank Dest Bn**, Louisville, KY, 6/6-10, Ginger Robinson, (219) 493-9946, giner.robinson@menasha.com; **38th Inf Div 149th Inf Rgt Co I**, Marion, KY, 6/7, Z. Cumel, (270) 965-3486; **36th Inf Div Midwest Chapter**, Minneapolis, 6/8-10, Wenzel Franz, (715) 425-7347, ncfrenz@spacestar.net; **90th Chem Mortar Bn**, Minneapolis, 6/10-14, Charles Foster, (952) 944-3544, daifc2@cs.com

**29th, 570th Air Ser Grp**, Charlotte, NC, 6/11-15, Frank Pace Sr., (330) 343-7855, frank@tusco.net; **238th Cbt Eng Bn**, Oklahoma City, 6/14-16, Donald Ray, (405) 341-0888; **1st Cav 82nd FA**, Lafayette, IN, 6/14-16, Alva Snider, (765) 762-2032, absnider@iocaline.com; **9th Inf Div 39th Inf Rgt 4th Bn**, Springfield, MO, 6/14-16, Allen Suendgard, (402) 426-9598; **7th Army 33rd Armd 2nd Tank Bn Co A**, Radcliff, KY, 6/14-17, Tom Howard, (907) 338-1961; **328th Radio Research Co Det**, St. Louis, 6/14-17, Thomas Heiser, (715) 423-3914, tshaiser@wctc.net

**33rd Army Band Alumni**, Minneapolis, 6/16-18, Lorelei Giddings, (612) 729-4413, oboemuse@uswest.net; **Ret Army Med Spec Corp**, Las Vegas, 6/18-21, Elna Mayhugh, (650) 349-6583, ecmayhugh@aol.com; **99th Inf Div Assn**, Ft. Mitchell,

KY, 6/18-24, Bill Meyer, (316) 382-3475, donna@99div.com; **105th AAA AW Bn**, Metairie, LA, 6/20-22, Sheila Favalora, (504) 865-5240, favalora@tulane.edu; **Persian Gulf Cmd Vets WWII**, Omaha, NE, 6/20-24, James Doak, (641) 385-2393, pgcvowwii@aol.com; **5th Army Assn WWII**, Italy Tour, 6/20-30, Sy Canton, (516) 432-3022; **744th Rwy Opn Bn**, Itasca, IL, 6/21-23, William Plattenberger, (630) 773-9028, wplattenberger@juno.com; **23rd MP Co Americal Div Vietnam**, Cleveland, 6/21-24, Paul Stiff, (248) 680-0749, pstiff3@aol.com

**Americal Div Assn**, Cleveland, 6/21-24, David Taylor, (330) 723-2517, dwtaylor@neobright.net; **385th AAA AW Bn**, Chattanooga, TN, 6/22-24, Douglas Cochran, (301) 733-6312; **196th Lib Assn**, Gettysburg, PA, 6/26-29, Ron Davis, (765) 847-2385; **8th Army Div Assn**, Norfolk, VA, 6/26-7/1, Sidney Bishop, (423) 475-2883, sbbishop@bellsouth.net; **34th Armd 2nd Bn**, San Juan Capistrano, CA, 6/27-29, Pat Forster, (949) 493-4080; **15th FA 7th Bn**, Ft. Sill, OK, 6/28-7/1, Luis Cantu, (508) 536-9418, lvcantu@aol.com; **9th Inf Div 39th Inf Rgt 3rd Bn**, Ft. Mitchell, KY, 6/28-7/1, Geraldo Gapol, (808) 455-2105, alohagg339@prodigy.net

## COAST GUARD

**USCGC Rush**, WHEC 723, Las Vegas, 5/6-10, John Vogel, (520) 783-3625; **LST 791**, Branson, MO, 5/13-18, Charles Haight, (941) 729-1469, clhaight21@aol.com; **USCG Eastwind**, SAGB W 279, Boston, 5/25-28, Joseph Quintiliani, (508) 548-0329, uscgdiver@webtv.net; **USCG Burton Island**, WAGB 283, Las Vegas, 6/20-23, Greg Reel, (816) 454-7991, gbreel@swbell.net

## JOINT

**PB4Y All Sqdn**, Albuquerque, NM, June, Ronald Sathre, (510) 487-7249, pb4ygyu@aol.com; **Berlin Vets**, Las Vegas, 6/3-7, Charles Farrell, (727) 522-4633, berlinvets@cs.com; **Berlin Airlift Vets**, Springfield, IL, 6/17-21, Cal Korf, (941) 485-2625, cal@berlinveterans.com; **Vietnam Helicopter Crew**, Louisville, KY, 6/19-24, Charlie Rains, (901) 795-2850, vhcmaed@sprynet.com; **Mt. Eckstein**, Rimbach, W. Germany, Hagerstown, MD, 6/23-25, Glenn Miller, (915) 949-4775, rimbach 2001@yahoo.com; **6010th Eng Avn Co**, 919th Eng Avn Maint Co, Colorado Springs, CO, 6/26-28, Paul Repsher, (918) 650-0967, perepshe@msn.com; **PBR Forces Veterans**, Ft. Mitchell, KY, 6/28-7/1, Kerry Shaffer, (696) 451-5688, president@pbr-fva.org; **Newfoundland/Greenland**, Colorado Springs, CO, 6/29-7/1, Dee Teefy, (360) 452-3430, lodteef@webtv.net

## MARINES

**Bulk Fuel 1390/1391**, Las Vegas, 5/17-20, Marvin Peck, (717) 369-4698; **1st Div 1st Mar 2nd Bn**, New Orleans, 5/24-26, Daniel Savino, (732) 462-4348, usmcw21@aol.com; **7th Mar 2nd Bn Fox Co**, Gatlinburg, TN, 6/3-6, Bob Gallagher, (615) 360-7927, gal2001@home.com; **2/26th Weapons 2nd Plt Golf**

Co, Ticonderoga, NY, 6/7-10, Doc Lerp, (410) 374-1008, micler@ccpl.carr.org; **2nd AMTRAC Bn**, Albuquerque, NM, 6/13-16, Austin Rishel, (505) 797-4142; **Chi Chi Jima Marines**, Pittsburgh, 6/14-17, Bob Snyder, (717) 337-0358; **26th Reg 2nd Bn Hotel Co**, Santa Fe, NM, 6/20-23, Bill Hancock, (513) 738-5446, hancockw@one.net

## NAVY

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**USS Rich**, DE 695, Branson, MO, 6/5-8, Joseph Podorski, (636) 530-0226; **Farragut NTS**, Bevier, MO, 6/6-10, Chester Shoemaker, (660) 773-5313; **USS Barnett**, APA 5, Philadelphia, 6/7-10, John Kolstad, (805) 831-6038; **USS Mauna Loa**, AE 8, Virginia Beach, VA, 6/7-10, John Carter, (315) 342-9808, jclt@sonicnet.net; **USS Gen W.P. Richardson**, AP 118, **USS Gen William Mitchell**, AP 114, **USS Adm H.T. Mayo**, AP 125, **USS Pres Monroe**, AP 104, **USS Adm E.W. Eberle**, AP 123, **USS Gen George Randall**, AP 115, **USS Adm W.L. Capps**, AP 121, **USS Gen W.H. Gordon**, AP 117, **USS Gen J.C. Breckinridge**, AP 145, **USS Gen William Weigel**, AP 119, **USS Gen M.B. Stewart**, AP 140, **USS Gen H.F. Hodges**, AP 144, **USS Gen Harry Taylor**, AP 145, **USS Adm C.F. Hughes**, AP 124, **USS Golden City**, AP 169, **USS Adm W.S. Benson**, AP 120, AP Trans Assn, Norfolk, VA, 6/7-10, Chuck Ulrich, (516) 747-7426

**USS Hammerberg**, DE 1015, Columbus, OH, 6/8-10, Roger Kapes, (614) 470-4468, kapesrw@hammerberg.org; **USS Barbican**, ACM 5, Beckley, WV, 6/8-15, Charles Schultz, (517) 467-7520; **USS Peterson**, DD 969, Woodbridge, NJ, 6/9, J. Fenwick, (908) 537-6106, toddlerf@yahoo.com; **USS Capricornus**, AKA-57, San Francisco, 6/10-12, Thomas Longo, (410) 289-4504, dtlongo@aol.com; **VB/VPB/VP-106**, Branson, MO, 6/11-15, Arthur Hacker, (407) 242-1937, wood610@worldnet.att.net

**USS Warren**, APA 53, Overland Park, KS, 6/12-16, Warren Lofstedt, (913) 722-0672, banksy@kscable.com; **VR 21**, Reno, NV, 6/13-16, William Schweitzer, (775) 972-1391, schweitzer2@earthlink.net; **USS Conyngham**, DD 371/DDG 17, Washington, 6/13-17, Len Gordon, (732) 432-0588, ddggusboat@aol.com; **USS Fall River**, CA 131, Seattle, 6/13-18, David Morris, (954) 484-8365, rhodave@aol.com; **Radar Picket Ships**, San Diego, 6/14-16, Harry Miller, (401) 724-7278, yagr@



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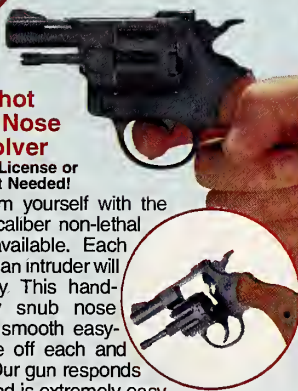
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USS *Franklin*, CV 13, Bar Harbor, ME, 6/21-24, Ernest Scott, (207) 427-6686; USS *Moale* Assn, DD 693, Virginia Beach, VA, 6/21-24, Don Boyle, (252) 756-1855, ussmoale@usa.net; USS *Shangri La*, CV/CVA/CVS 38, Pittsburgh, 6/21-25, Chuck Hull, (724) 378-3244, chull1809@aol.com; USS *Corry*, DD 817, Pittsburgh, 6/22-25, Jim Shafic, (330) 544-3301, jeshafic@aol.com; USS *Dashiell*, DD 659, Harper's Ferry, WV, 6/24-27, Jack Heasty, (304) 274-1801, trouble1@msn.com

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Anyone who served with the 438th Heavy Const Sig Corps during WWII, contact Greg Jacobs, 227 N. Shaddle, Mundelein, IL 60060, call (847) 970-7852 or e-mail gkjacobs2001@yahoo.com.

Anyone who served on the USS *Muscatine*, contact Carroll Abbott, 2917 142nd Lane NW, Andover, MN 55304, call (763) 757-3475 or e-mail yoyoabbott@aol.com.

Anyone who served on the USS *Darke* between October 1944 and April 1946, contact Jack

Harless, 830 E. Main St., Greenville, OH 45331 or call (937) 548-4406.

Anyone who served with the OR Div aboard the USS *Oklahoma City* between 1960 and 1963, contact Ed Yunker at 11219 Easy Street, Brainerd, MN 56401, call (218) 825-3777 or e-mail edy@brainerd.net.

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Anyone who served with the 810th AC&W Sqn at Winston-Salem AFS, N.C., contact Gary Smith, 5660 Belwus Creek Road, Walkertown, NC 27051, call (336) 595-3267 or e-mail gysmith@atfglobal.net.

Anyone who served with HQ Btry 6, 56th Air Defense Arty, Americal Div in Chu Lia, Vietnam, between 1968 and 1969, contact Jim Marquis, Box 181, Watersmeet, MI 46696, call (906) 472-2640 or e-mail jmarquis@pocketmail.com.

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Anyone who served at Fleet Hospital 103 on Guam between November 1944 and May 1946, contact Lee Roy Michael, 1768 Buckingham Green Court, St. Charles, MO 63303, call (636) 916-4757 or e-mail lmicahel@mail.win.org.

Anyone who attended Small Boat School at Saigon, Vietnam, between 1968 and 1969, contact John Paul Nowak, 94 Church Ave., Staten Island, NY 10314, call (718) 761-6009 or e-mail imdinkydau2@aol.com.

Anyone who served with the 148th Ord, R&C Co in Frankfurt-Griesheim, Germany, between 1951 and 1952, contact Percy R. De Rouen, 622 Williams Drive, Lake Charles, LA 70607.

Anyone who served with USMC 5th Comm Bn FLC, 3rd Marine Amph Force at Danang, contact Richard Deml, 822 S. 21st, La Crosse, WI 54601, call (608) 784-2616 or e-mail rickof48@aol.com.

Anyone who served with Army 132nd Evac Hosp, Semi-Mobile, in Europe during WWII, contact LeRoy M. Reams, 2872 S. Wheeling Way, Aurora, CO 80014, call (303) 752-4844 or e-mail lmr@estreet.com.

Anyone who served with the 630th Eng Co, contact Cecil Brown at 2602 Appaloosa Lane, Mahomet, IL 61853, call (217) 586-5069 or e-mail brownlinc@aol.com, or Jim Fitzgerald at 476 SW 121st Place, Portland, OR 97225, call (503) 641-8180 or e-mail pproacc@home.com.

Anyone who served with USAF 3921st RTS at West Drayton RAFB in West Drayton, England, between 1953 and 1955, contact John Berlekamp, 604 Nutmeg Place, Sun City Center, FL 33573, call (813) 634-5122 or e-mail jiberle@juno.com.

Anyone who served with USMC 7th Motor Trans Bn between September 1950 and December 1951, contact Richard "Smoky" Stover, 20340 SW 344th St., Homestead, FL 33034 or call (305) 245-8383.

Anyone who served with VS-831 or VS-36 at NAS Norfolk, Va., between 1951 and 1954, contact John Meyer, 1934 3rd St., North, St. Cloud, MN 56303, call (320) 252-8287 or e-mail w0jji@qwest.net or mjoanne8@qwest.net.

Anyone who served with the 28th Cav Recon Sqn Mech in Germany between 1945 and 1946, contact Charles W. Chappuis, P.O. Box 258, Rayne, LA 70578, call (337) 334-4707 or e-mail moon1926@aol.com.

Anyone who served with the Westover AFB Motor Pool Drivers, 814th Trans Sqn, between December 1961 and September 1965, contact John Mott, 843 Maxwellton Lane, Dayton, OH

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Anyone who served with the 3rd AF or 3rd Bomb Cmd on TDY from McDill Field to Venice AFB between 1943 and 1945, contact Eugene Culpepper, P.O. Box 917, Forest, MS 39074 or call (601) 469-4222.

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Anyone who served with PATSU 8-44 on the islands of Shemya and Attu during WWII, contact R.W. "Bob" Miller, 266 County Road 2436, Mineola, TX 75773, call (903) 569-6609 or e-mail rwmiller5@juno.com.

Anyone who served with the 8221st or 8219th AU Field Arty Topographic & Meteorological Det during the Korean War, contact Michael C. J. Kaminski, 2912 S. 10th Ave., Broadview, IL 60155, call (708) 345-8244 or e-mail michael0642@ameritech.net.

Anyone who served with the USN Armed Guard during WWII, contact A. Bridger at 62 Strathmore Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34233, call (941) 377-0954 or e-mail five711@aol.com.

## TAPS

Jay Field, Dept. of Hawaii. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Memb. 1964-1965; Nat'l Counter-Subversive Activ. Cncl. Memb. 1965-1968 and 1969-1980; Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Memb. 1969-1970; Nat'l M&PA Cmte. Memb. 1967-1968; Alt. Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1971-1972; Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Memb. 1975-1976; Dept. Cmdr. 1968-1969 and 1973-1974; and various Department positions.

Josef Kocsis, Dept. of South Carolina. Nat'l Americanism Vice Chmn. 2000-2001.

Roy B. Koeneman, Dept. of Illinois. Nat'l M&PA Cmte. Memb. 1957-1958 and 1962-1964; Nat'l M&PA Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1958-1961; Nat'l Housing Cmte. Memb. 1962-1968; Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1968-1985 and 1995-1998; Dept. Cmdr. 1984-1985; Nat'l Life Insurance & Trust Cmte. Memb. 1985-1993; Nat'l Life Insurance & Trust Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1990-1993; Alt. Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1991-1993; Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1993-1995; Nat'l Fin. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1993-1995; Dept. Cmdr. 1984-1985; and various Department positions.

Robert H. Lounsbury, Dept. of Iowa. Nat'l M&PA Cmte. Memb. 1950-1951; Nat'l Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials Cmte. Memb. 1955-1956 and 1961-1962; Nat'l Trophies, Awards and Ceremonials Cmte. Chmn. 1956-1961; Nat'l Rehab. Cmsn. Advisory Bd. Memb. 1963-1964; Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1965-1969; Nat'l Sec. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1965-1966; Nat'l Foreign Relations Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1967-1968; Nat'l Legis. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1968-1969; Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1973-1988; Dept. Cmdr. 1953-1954; and various Department positions.

Raymond V. Mahoney, Dept. of Florida. Nat'l Rehab. Cmsn. Advisory Bd. Memb. 1964-1966 and 1982-1984; Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Memb. 1967-1970; Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Memb. 1966-1967 and 1970-1972; Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1970-1971 and 1975-1979; Nat'l Veterans Preference Cmte. Memb. 1970-1972; Nat'l VA&R Region 3 Memb. 1971-1975; and Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Memb. (11th Congress District) 1983-1986, 1989-1990 and 1993-1994.

Willie Pitts Jr., Dept. of Georgia. Nat'l Defense Civil Preparedness Cmte. Memb. 1992-2001; Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Memb. 1999-2000; Alt. Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1999-2001; Dept. Cmdr. 1995-1996; and various Department positions.



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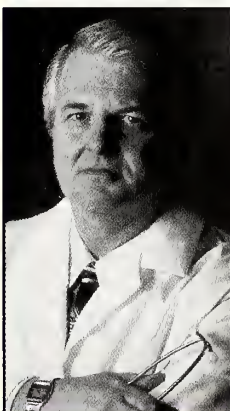


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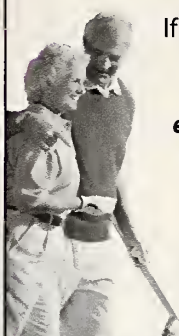
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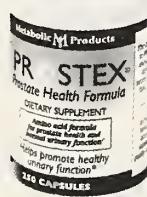
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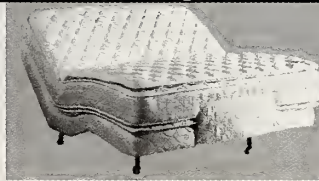


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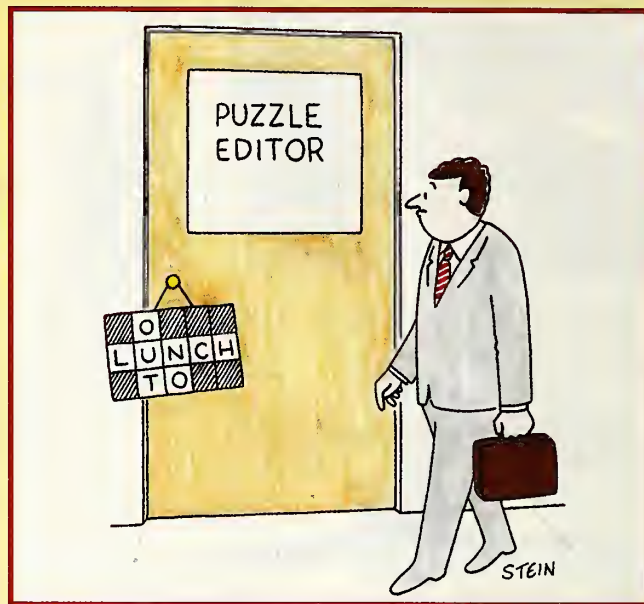
What's the difference between an onion and an accordion?  
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— Submitted by Terry C. Kaiser, Palm Bay, Fla.

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— George Eliot



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Tact is making people feel at home in your home when you wish they were in theirs.

— Submitted by John F. Felton, Somers, N.Y.

## Moving Up In The World

High heels were invented by a woman who was kissed on her forehead.

— Submitted by Elmer Reznicek, Prineville, Ore.



## Parting Shots jokes wanted

The American Legion Magazine welcomes anecdotes, jokes or submissions for "Parting Shots." Submissions should include the name, hometown

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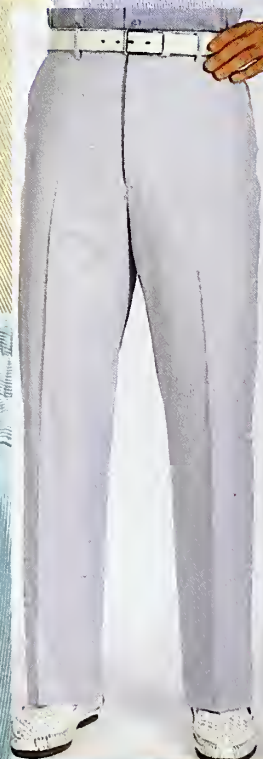
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